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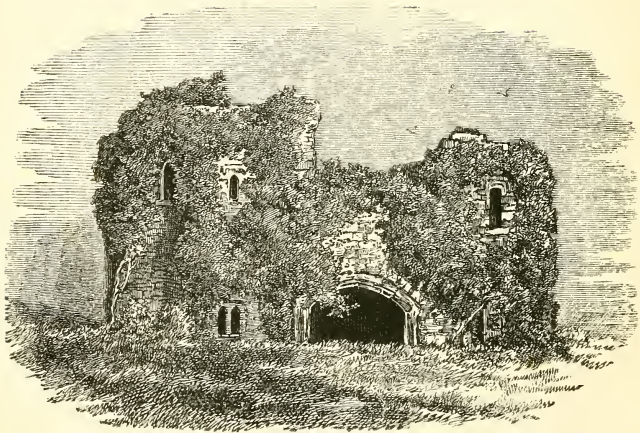
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ABBAY GATEWAY, VICARAGE GARDEN.

THE  
ABBOTS OF TAVISTOCK:

WITH

Views Beyond.

BY

THE REV. D. P. ALFORD, M.A.,

VICAR OF TAVISTOCK.

D. P. Alford, M.A.,  
77

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"Tavistock, that fruitful seed-plot of eminent and famous men."

PRINCE'S *Worthies of Devon*. "Sir John Glauvil."

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## PREFACE.

A FEW words are necessary to explain the history of these papers. Most of them were written for the *Tavistock Parish Magazine*, and this, I hope, may be considered some excuse for their abruptness and also their simplicity; for the room at my disposal was strictly limited, and most of those for whom I was writing knew almost nothing of English history.

The late Duke of Bedford saw these papers from the first, and was much interested in them. He wrote to me in the autumn of 1890, and asked that he might bear the cost of having them printed as a book. It was one of the many acts of thoughtful and unexpected kindness with which those who knew him were quite familiar, but which were done so quietly that the public never gave him credit for them. I must gratefully add that the present Duke of Bedford has fully endorsed his father's generous offer.

The chapters from Abbot Bonus, 1329, were written independently of the *Parish Magazine*, and are therefore more varied in length than the earlier ones.

The first chapter, on "Our Earliest History," and that on "Four Tavistock Worthies of the 17th Century," are very slightly altered from papers read before the Devonshire Association.

The last chapter brings down our local annals, in a very cursory fashion, to the present time. It may serve as a rough outline to be filled up in detail by some future historian of Tavistock.

The appendices contain points of local interest that have occurred to me since the papers were in the printers' hands; with two earlier papers on Larkham, slightly altered from their first appearance in our *Parish Magazine*.

Believing that self-respect and respect for others are increased by some knowledge of our place in the great drama of human life, I have tried to give a fresh interest to general history from the standpoint of our local history. This local history consists of translations and summaries from Dugdale and Oliver, supplemented from Prebendary Hingeston-Randolph's Episcopal Registers and our own Parish Records, recovered in 1886 and edited by Mr. R. N. Worth. For general history, I have followed the best modern authorities within my reach in a country town, enlivening them with occasional quotations from the early English Chronicles.

I am deeply indebted to the Rev. E. C. C. Wilson and Mr. R. N. Worth for looking over the proofs; to the Rev. S. Baring-Gould for suggestions as to St. Rumon and St. Eustachius, and for the loan of

books ; to the Rev. F. W. O. Wintle, Rector of Bere Ferrers, and the Rev. C. H. Taylor, Vicar of Milton Abbot, for interesting facts concerning their own parishes ; to the Rev. L. T. Badcock, of Abbey Chapel, for the loan of books ; to Mr. Edward Rundle, of the Bedford Office, for much help in reference to old Tavistock ; to the Rev. J. C. Parkyn, Rector of Sydenham-Damerel, for a very long loan of Dr. Oliver's *Monasticon* of Devon and Cornwall ; to the Rev. C. W. Boase, of Exeter College, Oxford, the Rev. J. Ingle Dredge, and the Rev. Herbert Reynolds, for important details about our vicars ; and especially am I indebted to Prebendary Hingeston-Randolph, not only for a general supervision of the proofs, but also for many valuable suggestions. To these, and to all other kind helpers, I herewith offer my most sincere thanks.

THE VICARAGE, TAVISTOCK,  
*November 28th, 1891.*





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THE  
ABBOTS OF TAVISTOCK.

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Book I.

CHAPTER I.

*OUR EARLIEST HISTORY.*

TO find sermons in stones probably requires a certain moral fitness and readiness to be taught; but it needs only a small mental equipment to learn from them important lessons in history—lessons in the history of the earth's crust, as they lie in their natural state and place; lessons in the history of the human kind when once the hand of man has touched them.\*

The only records for the earliest local history of Tavistock must be sought in stones. It is a pity that we have no more than a few carved stones to suggest the beauty and grandeur of the Abbey Church, which must have been the pride and glory

\* The substance of this chapter was given in an address to the members of the Devonshire Association in the Vicarage Garden, 31st July, 1889; and is reprinted from the *Transactions* of the Devonshire Association for the Advancement of Science, Literature, and Art, 1890.—vol. xxii. pp. 229-233.

of the Tavistock of the middle ages. But as to our earliest and darkest history, we may well be thankful for the light that chipped and inscribed stones have thrown upon it. First as to chipped stones. Flint flakes collected by Mr. Alexander near Princetown, and now in the Library museum-room, tell of a time when this country was occupied by a primitive people, who had not learnt the use of metals, and used flint instead, for knives and arrow-heads. These Neolithic people, or folk of the new stone age, were probably at one time the occupants of the whole land, having conquered the Cave-dwellers of the first stone age. They were here long before the Celts crossed the Channel, possibly before Great Britain and Ireland were separated from the Continent. These were the Kynetes of Herodotus, the Iverni or Iberii of later writers. They were connected with the Finns on one side, and with the Basques of the Pyrenees on the other. Their language lingered in parts of Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland, at least until the time of Columba, A.D. 563. Ireland owes to them its name of Ierne, and very likely much of the readiness and vivacity of its people.

These Iverni were conquered by the Gaels, the first great division of the Celts. In their turn, the Gaels were conquered and driven westward by the Cymry or Britons, the second great division of the Celts. Most of the Gaels sought new homes in Ireland and the mountains of Scotland. But some still held their own in these western parts of Britain, and would seem to have strengthened themselves against their Cymric invaders by coalescing with

the native Iverni, whom they had previously conquered.

The inscribed stones in the vicarage garden are taken to prove that such a settlement of Gaels occupied the country about Tavistock, some time after the Roman invasion. For, in the first place, such stone monuments were the distinguishing mark of the Gaels, whilst the Cymry preferred barrows or mounds of earth; and, in the second place, the words and letters show that these stones were inscribed after the Gaels had learnt, from their Roman conquerors, the Latin language and the Roman alphabet. Moreover, as there is no cross on any of these stones, they were probably first set up before the Gaels had embraced Christianity. They may therefore be possibly as early as the third or fourth century; that is, fifteen or sixteen hundred years old. If so, they were inscribed when the amalgamated races of Gaels and Iverni were scattered over the neighbourhood in rude villages or cantonments; and the only township on the Tavy, if there was any at all, was the circular enclosure on the old Exeter road, which, being more carefully *stockaded*\* after the English invasion, has given us our English name of *Tavistoke* or *Tavistock*.

Our first inscribed stone was removed in 1780 from the pavement in West Street, and used as a bridge over the mill leat at the head-weir. In 1804 Mr. Bray, afterwards vicar of Tavistock, had it placed in the garden of the Abbey house, where the Bedford hotel now stands. In 1818, when the

\* "A *stoke* is a place *stockaded*." I. TAYLOR, *Words and Places*, p. 80.

present vicarage was built for him, Mr. Bray had the stone set up in the place it now occupies at the south-west corner of the house. The inscription is in Latin, and means, "To the memory of Nepranus, son of Conbevus." Unless, indeed, as Professor Sullivan suggests in his article on Celtic literature in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the word "*fili*" is not the Latin for "*son*," but the Gaelic for "*bard*." The Professor seems to stand very much alone in this suggestion; but it is at least a pleasant fancy, that these stones show the reverence felt in earliest times for inspired singers, and that Mrs. Bray and William Browne, the Elizabethan poet, had predecessors in the art of romancing here on the banks of the Tavy, at the very dawn of our civilization.

Our second inscribed stone, in the south-east corner of the garden, was brought there by Mr. Bray in 1831, as a gift from Sir Ralph Lopes. It was then lying in the village street of Buckland Monachorum; but in 1804 it had been one of the supports of a blacksmith's shop near the church there. This inscription is also in Latin, and means, "To the memory of Sabinus (or Sarinus) son of Maccodechet." Here we have, first, the test word for Gaelic occupation, *mac* for *son*; then the name *Dechet*, which abounds in suggestions of the greatest interest. This patronymic Maccodechet, spelt in various ways, is found in Anglesea and in the south of Ireland. The word *Dechet*, Professor Rhys contends,\* is not Celtic at all, but probably a name of the god-ancestor of these Iverni, of whom I have spoken. Names of places, the shape of skulls, and hints from old

\* *Celtic Britain*, p. 262.



chronicles, all point to the intermingling of the Gaels with these earlier occupants. Professor Rhys thinks we have an example of this intermingling in our Maccodechet inscription. The name of the god-ancestor Dechet, or Decet, is found also in the Decantæ of the north of Scotland, and in the Decanti of North Wales. Dechet was, therefore, the ancestor of one of the most important tribes of these early settlers; and when they amalgamated with the Gaels, they clung to the name they held in such reverence. They were proud still to call themselves "sons of Dechet"; but they were content to do so in the language of their former masters and new allies, and thus they became "Maccodechets." If this theory be true, our second inscribed stone tells us of three successive conquests of the land, Ivernian, Gaelic, and Roman. If we add to these the Britonic, English, Danish, and Norman, we have a rough picture of our country from the earliest times down to the eleventh century, as seven waves of invasion poured in upon it.

Our third inscribed stone, near the bridge over the canal, was found by Mr. Bray in 1804. It was then used as a gatepost, in a field between Buckland Monachorum and Roborough Down. After the Maccodechet stone had been removed to the vicarage garden, Mr. Bray tried to secure this one also. But his efforts were in vain, although the late Miss Emma Buller,\* kindly acting as negotiator, offered a good price for it. In 1868, however, the late Duke of

\* Miss Emma Buller, with unabated life and spirits, was present in the vicarage garden when this address was given in July, 1889, and said she was authorized to offer a guinea for the stone.

Bedford, then Mr. Hastings Russell, was able to get possession of the old gatepost in exchange for a new one; and thus, Dr. Tancock being the vicar, the third inscribed stone was set up in its place, in the vicarage garden beside the other two. The Latin inscription here is, "To the memory of Dobunnus Faber, son of Enabarrus." Because *faber* is the Latin for a smith, Mr. Bray\* suggested that this might be the tombstone of a smith of the tribe of the Dobunni, a Britonic and civilized people on the borders of Wales. It is perhaps just possible that a stranger might have been thus honoured by the more backward Gaels for his skill in making swords and spears of some new and improved fashion. Just as a white man, for his skill in fire-arms, might be made a chief among the Red Indians. Mr. Bray's other hint, that the "G. C." at the back may stand for Galba Cæsare, is far more improbable than that Dobunnus Faber may mean a smith of the Dobunni.

But the most interesting thing about this third stone is the Ogham inscription on its edge. This was only discovered by Professor Fergusson in 1873. Dear old Mrs. Bray could not be persuaded that there was any such inscription, on the ground, so natural for a loyal wife and sister to adopt, that neither her husband nor her brother, who were both learned archæologists, had ever observed it. But this is easily accounted for. The Ogham marks are on that edge of the stone which must have been embedded in hedge or bank when it stood as a gatepost, for they are on the opposite side from the iron hooks on which the gate was hung; so that, until it

\* *Borders of Tavy*, i. 322-325.

was removed to its present place of honour, not the keenest archæological sight could have detected its Ogham secret. Besides, the markings are so little obvious that the stone had occupied its present open position for five years before they were recognized. Then, as Professor Fergusson tells us in his monograph on the subject, read before the Archæological Society of Dublin, whilst he was examining the Maccodechet stone which had been the object of his mission to the vicarage garden, the sharp eyes of Mrs. Fergusson discovered the Ogham at the left-hand corner of this Enabarrus stone. Now, when it has been once pointed out, any one can see it, but especially when the evening sun falls across the stone, and brings out the shadows in the markings. Like other Oghams, our stone is biliteral; that is, it has the same inscription in the Latin and Ogham characters. It thus enabled Professor Fergusson to find the Ogham B, which he had long been looking for. Professor Rhys thinks that Ogham was probably invented by a Gaelic native of South Wales, and spread thence into the south of Ireland, and into Devon. The only other Devon Ogham is the Fardel stone, now in the British Museum. The Irish Oghams show they are of Christian times by their wording, or the cross carved upon them. The Scotch seem to be much later than the Irish. Our Devon Oghams are most likely considerably earlier than either the Scotch or Irish. Possibly Ogham writing was invented to be used as a cipher, in days of trouble and persecution; but its origin and its purpose are amongst the many questions about which the doctors differ, and on which, therefore, the

unlearned may be well content to suspend their judgment.

Our inscribed stones take us back in thought to the beginning of the middle ages, as far at least as the dawn of our modern life, some fourteen centuries ago, when Clovis was conquering Gaul and turning it into France, and Theodoric, the Ostrogothic King of Italy, was giving lessons in statesmanship and tolerance to the degenerate descendants of Roman citizens.

## CHAPTER II.

### *THE FOUNDING OF THE ABBEY.*

IN the reign of Edgar the Peaceable, his brother-in-law, the mighty Ordulf, the chief of Damnonia, was moved by a heavenly vision\* to build an oratory on the banks of Tavy, or Little Taw, and afterwards to found a monastery on the same spot. This Ordulf was the brother of the Lady Elfrida, King Edgar's second wife, the mother of Ethelred the Unready.

The vision happened in this way: Ordulf, as devout in spirit as he was stalwart in body, went forth one night, as his custom had been from his youth, to pray to God beneath the stars. His home was the stockaded fort on the high ground above the Tavy to the north-east. As he stood with uplifted hands, there appeared to him, in the midst of the woods by the river, a pillar of fire brighter than the

\* This is summarised from a cartulary given in DUGDALE'S *Monasticon*, p. 494, num. ii. It was once in the possession of John Maynard, but is now lost. The style is intended to suggest the mythical character of the story.

sun at noonday. That same night an angel appeared to him in his dreams, and bade him go forth at the first dawn to the place where he saw the pillar, and there build an oratory to the blessed evangelists. If he would do this, the angel said, his sins should be forgiven him. At the first dawn, Ordulf, with much gladness, sought and found the sacred spot, for it was marked with four stakes as the angel had promised, and there he built an oratory, as it was told him.

But when some years had passed away, it seemed to this good earl, that he must do yet more for the glory of God. Therefore, near by his oratory, he set up a great monastery, with goodly buildings, large enough to hold a thousand persons. He also gave to the abbot and convent much land in many places, to keep them in comfort and to maintain the service of God.

Of the lands he gave, these were his by inheritance: Tavistoke, Midelton (Milton), Hatherleghe, Berliton (Burrington), Leghe (Rumonsleigh), Dunethem, Chuvelin, and Lankinhorn.

He also bestowed upon his monastery these which he had with his wife: Hame (Abbotsham), Werelgete, Orlege, Auri, Rame, Savyok, Pannaston, Tornebiri (Thornbury), Colbroke, Lege (Leigh), Wlsithetun, Clymesland (Stoke Clymesland).

When the church of the monastery was built, the pious Ordulf caused to be laid therein the bones of his mother and brother, and also of his venerable father, Ordgar, who is said by some chroniclers to have founded the abbey. But after his death, Ordulph, as the true founder, was buried there in

an immense shrine, that was quite a wonder to look at.\*

Moreover, Ordulf, with great reverence, caused the bones of the holy bishop, St. Rumon, to be brought from their quiet resting-place in the little church in the wood on the banks of the Fal (St. Rumon Larihorne, as it was then called), and he laid them in a costly sepulchre in the church of his monastery. Many wonderful miracles, now of set purpose overlooked, were wrought at this tomb; and the church was dedicated to the honour of the blessed Virgin Mary and of St. Rumon.

Ethelred† the king, the nephew of Ordulf, granted a charter of rights and liberties to the abbot and convent of Tavistock, binding them by the wholesome rule of St. Benedict, and giving them freedom from all burdens, except for defence against invaders, and for keeping up of bridges and fortresses.

This charter is said to have been confirmed, with a seal of the holy cross, by Ethelred the king, and to have been witnessed by Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury, and Oswald of York, by Alfstan, bishop of London, and nine other bishops; also by Athelmere, then earl of Devon, and five other earls (duces), and many of inferior rank.

According to the manner of the time, the charter ends with a terrible warning not to encroach upon the munificent endowments of the abbey. Whosoever shall do so, let him be cut off from Jesus Christ,

\* William of Malmesbury, in DUGDALE'S *Monasticon*, p. 493, num. i.

† DUGDALE, p. 495, num. iii.

by whom the whole world was set free from the old enemy of mankind, let him take his place on the left hand with Judas the traitor; and unless he repent, may he have no pardon in this active life, and no rest in the contemplative life beyond, but be tortured miserably in eternal fires with Ananias and Sapphira.

If the monks did not invent this early charter, it is likely enough that they touched it up for their own advantage. To protect their temporalities by spiritual terrors was a tempting mode of defence in lawless times.

### CHAPTER III.

#### *ST. RUMON.\**

IN the dismal reign of King Stephen, more than seven hundred years ago, Tavistock was praised by William of Malmesbury for its pleasant groves, its abundance of fish, and its convenient monastic buildings, with flowing streams passing through them to carry off all impurities. William also tells us that the figure of St. Rumon, carved in stone, in his episcopal robes, was to be seen in the conventual church at Tavistock, lying as it were in state in a beautiful shrine between the choir and the lady chapel, as in more humble wise it can be seen now in the Cornish church of Ruan Lanihorne. Even then, in King Stephen's time, all written record of his deeds had perished, and only rumours survived of his

\* The feast of St. Rumon used to be kept in the Cathedral Church of Exeter on the 30th of August. (OLIVER, Additional Supplement to *Monasticon*, p. 13.)



goodness and his miracles. What can we do, seven hundred years later, but try to put together the few fragments that remain to us, so as to form some rough picture of the man and his work.

Rumon, we are told, was a Scot of Ireland (*Scotus Hiberniensis*). This reminds us that, in the fourth century, Ireland was known by two names; Hibernia, perhaps from Iberians from Spain occupying the coasts, especially towards the south; and Scotia, from the Scoti, the chief tribe of Gaelic Celts holding the interior, and especially the north. About A.D. 350 many of these Scoti crossed to Caledonia, and, allying themselves with their Gaelic kindred there, became so strong that the country of their adoption was called Nova Scotia. Then, in the course of time, the Scoti, prevailing more and more in their new home, gave it the name of Scotland, whilst their old home forgot their claims and became simply Hibernia or Ireland. Still the old chroniclers remembered the distinction of race, and so they tell us that Rumon was a Scot, though he was born in Ireland.

Untroubled alike by Roman or German invaders, Ireland was scarcely known to the outer world till St. Patrick, a Briton, who had been a captive slave there in his youth, returned in the year 432 to preach the gospel to his former masters. So greatly did the word of God prosper, that what had been a rude and pagan country, became, within fifty years of St. Patrick's death, the centre of light and learning, both human and divine, to other nations, the one spot in Europe where letters and divinity were still cultivated when all other lands were weltering in the stormy decline of the Roman Empire. It is good to remember



that, if Ireland very seldom since has known quietness and joy, at least from the death of St. Patrick in 472 to the coming of the Norsemen in 748, it was the happiest, because the most peaceful, country in Europe.

Neither did Ireland keep her comfort to herself. The light that was in her shone forth brightly, as all true light must. So she sent forth zealous missionaries to the Cymry of Wales and Cornwall, to the Frisians of the North Sea, and even to the Germans of Burgundy and Italy. Thus did these Irish Gaels, endued with power from on high, seek to reconquer their conquerors, who in the slow march of time had driven them from their homes in Central Europe and Britain, to occupy the Ultima Thule of Ireland.

Space fails us to speak of the labours of St. Gall in Switzerland, of St. Columban's monastery in the Apennines, and of St. Columba's in Iona, from which last, in the days of the good King Oswald, went forth Aidan to restore Christianity in Northumbria, and St. Chad to convert the Mercians. Suffice it to say that to no land did Ireland send more evangelists or more saints than to West Britain, or Damnonia. The rude crosses, such as those near us on Dartmoor, may possibly mark the limits of their missionary journeys.\* At all events, the names of many towns and villages bear witness to their labours even to our day.

Amongst these saints and evangelists one of the most noted was St. Rumon, who, leaving perchance his literary ease at Armagh, came, about the year

\* T. KERSLAKE'S *St. Richard the King*, p. 44.

620, to spend his life amongst these poor Britons, so harried and straitened by their West Saxon neighbours. Doubtless Rumon was a strong man and an eloquent, excelling his fellows in energy and wisdom, and so was appointed, presently, bishop of all Damnonia, from the Land's End to the verge of Exmoor. How great and abiding was his reputation is manifest from this, that, 300 years after his death, Ordulf chose his remains, before those of all other West-Country saints, to give honour to his new monastery. The witness that his good report, and probably his labours, spread over all Damnonia is still to be found in the villages that bear his name; Ruan Major, Ruan Minor, and Ruan Laniorne in the far west of Cornwall, and Rumonsleigh in North Devon, near South Molton. This last parish, like Ruan Minor, boasts even now of a sacred well bearing St. Rumon's name.

We can picture him first learning with ease the language of the natives, as being but another dialect of his own Celtic tongue; then preaching the gospel strenuously for many years up and down the land, swaying the hearts of his hearers with his Irish eloquence, as the summer breeze sways the ripening barley. Then we see him as bishop carefully organizing his diocese and choosing fit men to carry on his work.

When we last see St. Rumon he is spending his old age in the quiet retreat amongst the thick woods of Ruan Laniorne, worn out with work, but ripe in spiritual wisdom, and the trusted adviser of younger evangelists.

There can scarcely be a doubt that St. Rumon had

preached in the country about Tavistock, where he probably found the people speaking his own native Gaelic, for our inscribed stones are taken by the best authorities to prove continuous Gaelic occupation. It is even possible that an oratory or cell first established here by St. Rumon suggested to Ordulf the banks of the Tavy as a fitting site for his monastery.\* His name still lingers near Tavistock in Romonsleigh, a farm two miles on the road to Bere Ferrers, and in Rumleigh (Rumonsleigh), on the Tamar.

Tavistock parish church is dedicated to St. Eustace; but the inscription on the paten still used therein tells us that it was given in 1684 by Dawbeny Williams, Esq., to the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of St. Rumon of Tavistock. Probably Williams mistook the dedication of the abbey church for that of the parish church. Whilst thus cherishing the memory of our ancient local saint, Williams shows himself a true Reformer, for on a scroll, round his arms in the middle of the paten, are these words: "Panis vitæ eternæ, si dignus es, Religio Protestantium"—"The bread of life, if thou art worthy, this is the religion of Protestants." Thus we have the good saint and bishop of the seventh century connected with our own faith and worship, which were not very far from what he himself believed and practised.

\* T. KERSLAKE'S *St. Richard the King*, p. 38.

## CHAPTER IV.

*ABBOT ALMERUS AND THE DANES.*

IN the year of grace 981, when our abbey had been set on a firm footing by the charter of Ethelred II., Almerus, a good man and venerable, as his name implies, was chosen by the brethren to be their abbot or father, to rule over the church of Tavistock, and to feed it with the food of the divine Word. This Almerus, we are told, was a great reader, and also very zealous in religion. He spent much time in the study of Scripture and in prayer. He performed all his duties, especially in church matters, humbly, wisely, and promptly. He set a good example to his subjects both in word and deed, hating all wrongdoing, and taking pleasure in all that was just and right. He loved God above all things, and his neighbour as himself. In prosperity he was lowly, in adversity strong and confident. Such is the character of our first abbot, preserved for us in an old Latin record, which passed from the abbey itself into the hands of John Maynard, and is now to be seen printed in a fragment of Dugdale's *Monasticon* in our Public Library.

His character was soon to be put to the proof. Two hundred years earlier, the Danish Vikings had come in small bands, sailed up rivers, wasted the country, and returned to their ships. Soon, they came more often and in greater numbers, made themselves strong camps on the coast or by the river-side, and stayed the winter. Then, a little later,

they came in hordes to conquer and hold the land, led by the sons of Ragnor Lodbrok, and eager to avenge his blood. The great Alfred had to bend for a time to the storm ; and, even after his great victory at Ethandune, he yielded to them all north-east of Watling Street, on condition that they would become Christians, that so he might be able to trust their word and the land might enjoy some rest. Fairly the strangers kept the truce, and, under the strong rule of Alfred's successors, the two peoples, English and Danes, were nearly welded into one nation. Still there were always jealousies beneath the surface. For nearly forty years, even under inferior kings, these had been kept in check by the wisdom of the great Dunstan. But now, he was gone to his rest, the "Unready" was ruling, and the Danes became troublesome.

A strong king, like Alfred, can conquer his enemies, and then win them by kindness. A weak king, like Ethelred, can do neither. First he bought the Danes with bribes, then he treacherously massacred them. This brought down upon him the fleets of Norway and Sweden, under their kings Olaf and Sweyn. Then all the horrors of the earlier days came once more upon England ; for these outlandish Northmen, unlike those settled in the country, were still cruel pagans, sparing neither woman nor child nor grey hairs, and taking special delight in scattering the servants of the Lord and burning their houses.

In these trying times Abbot Almerus proved himself indeed the father of his people. When the Danes were spoiling the land, driving off the cattle,

and laying all manner of burdens on the country-folk, Almerus, with the consent of the brethren, gave out of their revenues a double Danegeld, or contribution, for the relief of those in distress.

But the storm came nearer, and the trial grew more personal, as the abbey itself became the prey of these ruthless vultures. The story is thus simply told by the old chroniclers. The horrors of war were too familiar to their readers to need any enlargement.

“An. 997. In this year the army went about Devonshire into the mouth of the Severn, and there harried as well in Cornwall as in North Wales and in Devonshire; and then landed at Watchet, and there wrought great evil in burning and man-slayings; and after that returned round the Land’s End on the south side, and wended into the mouth of the Tamar, and then went up until they came to Lydford, and burnt and slew everything they found; and burned Ordulf’s minster at Tavistock, and brought unspeakable booty with them to their ships.”

Let us hope that the good Almerus was still strong and confident (*fortis et securus*) in such a disaster as this; that he went about feeding with the word of God his poor flock, now scattered amongst the neighbouring homesteads; and that he and they, like Jeremy Taylor in his exile at Golden Grove, found ample amends for the loss of home comforts in closer communion with God.

## CHAPTER V.

*WHO RESTORED THE ABBEY?*

OUR abbey is\* said to have been left some time in ruins, and then to have been rebuilt more grandly than before. But when, and by whom? It is not easy to say. From 997 things were ever growing worse and worse here in England, till in despair the people were driven to prefer a foreign tyrant and relapsed pagan like Sweyn, to their own hereditary Christian king.

Whilst all the land suffered, the storm beat most furiously on the south and east. Now, in one year, Exeter and Wilton and Salisbury are burnt, and every shire in Wessex bears the cruel marks of the ruthless invaders. Now they ride as far inland as Oxford. Now they ravage East Anglia, and, in spite of some unusual manly resistance, burn Cambridge, and Thetford, and Norwich. Then they are harassing Kent, storming Canterbury, and presently doing to death the holy archbishop St. Alphege.

But more pitiable than the horrors of war were the wretched personal and local jealousies which kept shires and provinces apart, which turned the nation's leaders into traitors, and left a great people helpless before their enemies. There was some excuse for this disunion in the attachment to their own kingdoms which had survived the long ascendancy of Wessex, had been deepened by the strong admixture of Danish blood in the north and east, and was

\* WILLIS'S *Mitred Abbots*, vol. i. p. 170; in DUGDALE, p. 489.



recognized by Canute in his establishment of the four great earldoms of Northumbria, East Anglia, Mercia, and Wessex. Still, this disunion showed that, just as a lad needs much discipline to turn him into a strong, reliable man, so our England needed the discipline of two hundred years' servitude under Danes and Normans, to prepare her to come forth in the thirteenth century strong, free, united, and fit to take the foremost place amongst the nations.

Who could have thought of restoring churches and abbeys in those thirteen years of disaster? Yet it seems most likely that our abbey was restored early in 1000; and that, as it owed its first foundation to Earl Ordulf, so its restoration was due to another earl of Damnonia, Ethelmer, the friend and patron of the learned and devout Elfric the Grammarian.

There are two reasons for assigning the restoration to Ethelmer. First, Ethelmer founded a Benedictine abbey at Cerne in Dorset in 987, ten years before our abbey was burnt by the Danes. In 1013 he was still earl, heading the thanes of the West in their submission to Sweyn. Now surely, it is not likely that a founder of a Benedictine abbey in a neighbouring shire, would leave the great Benedictine abbey of his own shire long in ruins.

Secondly, Earl Ethelmer applied for a suitable abbot for his new abbey in Dorset, to the bishop of Winchester; Winchester having become a great training place for monks under Bishop Ethelwold, the friend and disciple of Dunstan. Elfric had followed Ethelwold from Abingdon, and was then, as master of the cathedral school, securing a



reputation for Winchester, as a centre of education, which it has never lost. This Elfric became the first abbot of Cerne. What could be more likely than that Ethelmer, having drawn one first-rate abbot from Winchester, should look there for another? At all events Livingus, the first abbot of Tavistock after the restoration, was, like Elfric, a monk of Winchester.

Soon after its restoration, our abbey became the final resting-place of Edwy, or Edwin, Atheling, the son of king Ethelred, and the brother of Edmund Ironside. Rudborne says, in his *Anglia Sacra*,\* that Edwin was buried here; and in Bishop Stapeldon's Appropriation of Whitchurch,† his name occurs between those of Ordulph and Livingus, in the list of those whose souls are to be prayed for, as being founders of the abbey. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 1017 says, "King Cnut drove out Eadwig the Atheling, and afterwards commanded him to be slain." May we suppose that, on his banishment, the Atheling sought refuge in our abbey; but his hiding-place being discovered, he was executed here in Tavistock by the order of the king, and then found a grave in the abbey church? It is possible that this may have drawn Canute's attention to Tavistock, and first made him acquainted with Livingus, whom he afterwards took as one of his train in his journey to Rome.

It is like a gleam of sunshine amid showers, to dwell for a moment, in those cruel, stormy times, on the life and character of Elfric. Already at

\* Vol. i. p. 229; referred to in OLIVER, p. 91.

† OLIVER, num. viii. p. 98.

Winchester he had written a glossary, a grammar, and amusing colloquies to make the learning of Latin more easy for English boys. At Cerne he translated most of the books of the Old Testament into the tongue of the people; so that in fact, by his devotion to culture and religion, he did something to forestall by many centuries the labours of Erasmus and Wiclif. He also wrote two books of homilies on the gospels for Sundays and saints' days, which received the official sanction of Archbishop Siric. And nearly six hundred years later, these books received another official sanction from another archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker; who encouraged the study of Anglo-Saxon, that Englishmen might read such works as these for themselves, and so learn that the reformed church, instead of inventing any new-fangled notions, had simply returned to an earlier and purer faith.

Elfric's sermon on Easter-day was issued by Parker in 1567, with the original on one page and a modern English rendering opposite, and also with a warranty attached signed by the two archbishops and thirteen bishops. One sentence will show why Elfric's works were so highly valued by our Reformers. Here it is in ancient and modern English: "Sothlice hit is Christes lichama and his blod; na lichamlice ac gastlice;" *i.e.* "Truly it is Christ's body and His blood; not corporeally, but spiritually." This is probably the same Elfric that was translated from Ramsbury in Wilts to be archbishop of Canterbury in 995 and died in 1006.

## CHAPTER VI.

*ABBOT LYFING THE FRIEND OF CANUTE  
AND OF EARL GODWIN.*

THAT careful chronicler Florence of Worcester, who died only seventy years after Livingus, tells us that, being still abbot of Tavistock, he was Canute's travelling companion to Rome in 1026, and brought back the celebrated letter in which that great king promised to reform his life and to rule with justice and clemency. The abbot, we are told, behaved on this occasion with the greatest prudence, and accomplished all that was entrusted to him, wisely and wonderfully, before the king's return. Probably it was in recognition of his practical wisdom that he was preferred to the see of Crediton in 1032.

From this time Livingus, or in English Lyfing, seems to have thrown in his lot with the great patriot Earl Godwin, and to have become, through this connection, and by his own character and talents, the most conspicuous churchman of his time.

On Canute's death these patriots strove to carry out the wishes of the great king, and present the crown to Hardicanute. The Danish influence, in London and the North, in favour of Harold, was too strong for them; but they did secure for Hardicanute, and his mother the Lady Emma, all south of the Thames; this being the last time that England was divided into two kingdoms. In bringing about this result, in a meeting of the Witan (wise men) at Oxford, we may well believe that the

power of Godwin was aided by the eloquence of Livingus.

Two years later, Hardicanute having alienated everybody by "wasting his time in Denmark," the Witan of Wessex transferred the crown of the southern kingdom to Harold, who was thenceforth king of the whole land until his death in 1040. Lyfing, who no doubt took a prominent part in this deposition of the worthless Hardicanute, became thereupon the friend and supporter of Harold. The year following, 1038, Harold gave him the bishopric of the Hwiccas (*i.e.* Worcester and Gloucester) to hold with Crediton; and he was with the king in his last illness, most likely as his spiritual adviser.

On Harold's death, Lyfing probably joined the other wise men of the kingdom in proclaiming Hardicanute, "thinking it was for the best."

Hardicanute was welcomed with joy and hope in 1040, just as Charles II. was welcomed in 1660; but it was said of him, as it might well have been said of Charles, "he did nothing royal during his whole reign." He was like the Stuarts also in laying upon the country a heavy tax in the form of ship money to pay his fleet. Two of his hus-carls,\* who were collecting this tax in Worcester, were attacked by the enraged populace and killed within the precincts of the minster. For this crime the whole city and county were ravaged by the troops of the half-alien king, and treated like an enemy's land.

Hardicanute took his revenge on the bishop of Worcester, by depriving him of his bishopric and

\* These were the king's Danish body-guard, and our first experience of a standing army.

giving it to the archbishop of York, on the plea that Lyfing had been concerned in the cruel dealings with Alfred the Atheling. But the sturdy Hwiccas stood by their eloquent bishop; and when the huscarls, under the command of all the great earls, were sent to harry both city and county, the charge brought against the people was, that they had not only murdered the collectors of the ship-money, but had also refused to receive their new bishop. Before the end of the year, Lyfing had made his peace with the king, probably, like Godwin, with the help of a handsome present, and he was reinstated in his bishopric.

Under the year 1042, Florence tells us that Edward was proclaimed king, "chiefly by the exertions of Earl Godwin and Livingus, bishop of Worcester." The eloquence of both these eloquent men, we may be sure, was taxed to the utmost, first in persuading the monkish prince to accept the crown, and then in persuading the Witan, gathered for the final settlement at Gillingham, to accept him as their king. Once more, the statesman bishop was amply rewarded. Bishoprics were practically in the gift of the crown then, as they are now, and it was in this same year, 1042, that Lyfing added the bishopric of Cornwall to those of Worcester and Devon.

That, as a pluralist bishop, he undertook duties which he could not possibly fulfil, is the one stain on the character of Livingus. May his conduct be excused on the plea, suggested by Dean Hook for Stigand's holding Winchester in plurality with Canterbury, that his motive was the English patriot's desire to keep out Norman prelates, whose growing

favour at court was already foreshadowing the Norman Conquest? Professor Freeman\* at all events speaks in the highest terms of our abbot. "The loss," he says, "of men like Lyfing is indeed the ruin of nations." Again, referring to 1045, he says, "In the course of the next year, England lost one of her truest worthies; the great earl lost one who had been his right hand man in so many crises of his life, in so many labours for the welfare of his country, Lyfing the patriot bishop of Worcester." The Chronicle for 1047 says, "This year died Livingus the eloquent bishop, and he had three bishoprics, one in Devonshire and in Cornwall and in Worcester." In the latter years of his life, Western Christendom was distracted by the opposing claims of three popes, and by the controversy of Berengar of Tours and Lanfranc of Bec concerning the eucharist. We are apt to fancy that Livingus was too busy to enter much into these discussions. Rather we would picture him striving by intense energy to meet the multitude of duties laid upon him; travelling over the vast extent of his scattered dioceses, stirring the hearts of the clergy with his eloquence, wisely administering discipline, or settling disputes with the tact which long and varied experience had taught him; carrying his travelling tent with him and gathering the clergy to his encampment in some opening of the woods that then covered the land; or entertained at manor house and monastery, and perhaps bringing some echo of the noise of the great world to his old comrades in the abbey of Tavistock, where, tradition says, his body

\* *Norman Conquest.*

was laid to rest after its many years of active labour. Lyfing did so much for our abbey that he was almost regarded as its second\* founder. William of Malmesbury, who wrote about a hundred years after Lyfing's death, says he was buried at Tavistock, and that the fifteen psalms of degrees were still sung here for the rest of his soul. From William also we have the story, which would have a different meaning for friends and foes, that when Lyfing died, a horrible din was heard through all the land, so that men thought the end of the world was come.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *ABBOT ALDRED† THE CHURCH REFORMER.*

OUR next abbot, Aldred, trod closely in the steps of Lyfing, following him from Winchester to Tavistock, and from Tavistock to Worcester. He succeeded Lyfing as bishop of Worcester in 1046, after being abbot of Tavistock fourteen years; and he was made archbishop of York in 1060.

From 1046 till he died in 1069, broken-hearted at the misery that came in the wake of the Conquest, he was the most active prelate in the land; a diligent bishop, often managing two, and sometimes three, bishoprics at once; the wisest of the king's counsellors and ambassadors; a warrior leading his people

\* OLIVER, p. 90, and *Appropriation of Whitchurch*, num. viii. p. 97.

† Though I have consulted *Florence of Worcester* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for these five chapters on Aldred, I am chiefly indebted to FREEMAN'S *Norman Conquest*, which has a full account of Aldred scattered over vols. ii. iii. and iv.



against marauding bands of Irish and Welsh ; the patriot statesman, advising Harold, rebuking William, and taking a prominent place in those frequent and orderly meetings of the wise men which were the noble germs of our English parliament.

A bishop so variously employed is readily charged with being worldly-minded, but Aldred seems to have carried the religious spirit into his politics. He showed a singular wisdom in reconciling the most violent enemies ; and his influence with the Confessor was chiefly due to his fame as a peace-maker, at a time when quarrels were very many and very fierce.

That Aldred enjoyed the revenues of the sees of Hereford and Ramsbury whilst he was bishop of Worcester ; that he tried to keep Worcester in plurality when he was made archbishop of York ; still more, that he retained manors of the abbey of Gloucester to enrich the see of Worcester, and manors belonging to Worcester to make up for the poverty to which the Danish inroads had reduced the see of York : all this is apt to give one the impression of a man greedy and unscrupulous. But such clearly is not the impression Aldred made upon the people of his own day. His conduct seems to have been justified in their opinion by his diligence in doing the work to which these revenues were attached, and by the good use he made of them ; for Aldred did not hoard his money, like his brother-prelate Stigand ; nor did he turn it to any personal advantage. He represented the church, as well as the state, in great embassies and distant pilgrimages ; and in a semi-barbaric age it cost much to represent them with due



pomp and ceremony. Again, he was a leading church reformer, when church reform was much in fashion; and he spent much money, as well as thought, in carrying out his reforms.

We will dwell upon this point for the rest of our chapter.

The latter half of the eleventh century was like the last fifty years—1840 to 1890—in this one respect; it was a great time for building and restoring churches.

The king set the example. In 1050 Aldred was sent to Rome “on the king’s errand,” which was to pray for a dispensation from his youthful vow of a pilgrimage to St. Peter’s. Aldred and his colleagues reached Rome on Easter eve, and took their places in the great synod which was then discussing the nature of the eucharist, and in which Lanfranc, as yet only a learned and eloquent monk, was using all his scholastic subtlety to overthrow the broader and more reasonable interpretation of Berengar. The good pope, Leo IX., readily granted the request of the devout king of England, but only on condition that he should build or restore a grand monastery to the honour of St. Peter; and thus it is to Leo’s decision that we owe Westminster Abbey.

Earls and bishops followed the example of the king, notably Harold in his foundation at Waltham, and the good old patriot Leofric at Coventry.

Aldred was not behindhand in this matter. The abbey of Gloucester seems to have had the bishop of Worcester as its patron. In 1058 Aldred consecrated the new conventual church there, having rebuilt it from the ground at his own expense. As archbishop

of York, he restored the church of Beverley with a ceiling rich in gold and colours, and a pulpit adorned with the work of German goldsmiths.

Much of the church reform of the time was due to closer contact with Flanders and Germany, as well as with France and Normandy. The German and Flemish connection was especially cherished by Aldred and Harold, as it had been by Godwin, to counteract the Norman influence, which was becoming a serious danger under the half-Norman king. Under these influences, several of the clergy trained in Flanders became English bishops, and naturally tried, though with little ultimate success, to introduce amongst their canons the stricter, semi-monkish mode of life with which they were familiar. Such was the aim of Leofric, who succeeded Lyfing in Devonshire, and removed the see to Exeter in 1050; and such was the aim of the Lotharingian Giso, who was made bishop of Wells in 1060.

When Aldred came to York in 1061 he found the canons living apart, dressing like laymen, neglecting their duties, frequenting the markets, and even begging from house to house. He insisted on the clerical dress and the strict observance of holy days; and, to remove all excuse for their free way of living, he built them a refectory at his own cost. This he did also for the canons of Southwell; and at Beverley he completed both the refectory and dormitory which had been begun by his predecessor, Archbishop Kynsey. So much for Aldred as a church reformer.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*ALDRED THE SOLDIER AND PEACE-MAKER.*

ALDRED was not very successful as a soldier.

In 1049, Sweyn Godwinson, the earl of the district, being outlawed for the murder of his cousin Beorn, Worcestershire and the neighbouring counties were overrun by Danish pirates from the coast of Ireland, in league with Griffith of South Wales.

Sweyn's earldom was held by a Norman, Ralph the Timid, the king's nephew. Little help could be expected from such a leader; so it fell upon the bishop to call out the forces of the shires and lead them against the enemy.

Unfortunately Aldred's army was largely made up of Welshmen. These sent word to their fellow-countrymen amongst the invaders, and so the English were taken by surprise and overthrown. Many good men were killed, whilst the rest broke through with the bishop and escaped.

Next year, besides going to Rome, as we have said, on the king's errand, Aldred did his part as peace-maker in bringing back Sweyn from exile. Perhaps he saw promise of better things mingled with the man's rough passion; perhaps he preferred ever so rough an English earl to a cowardly French one. However that may be, he seems to have prevailed on the Witan to reverse Sweyn's outlawry, and even in person to have fetched him from Bruges, where he had been the guest of Baldwin, count of Flanders.

The year following, 1051, not merely Sweyn but the whole Godwin family were in disgrace and trouble, and that really because they sided with their countrymen against the king's petted foreigners. For once the great Godwin was outwitted. The king, with an army at his back, would listen to no arguments, and the whole family was ordered to quit the country within five days.

Godwin, Sweyn, Tostig, and the rest found refuge in the hospitable capital of Count Baldwin, waiting there quietly till the tide of fortune turned in their favour.

Harold was less patient, and, taking his brother Leofwine with him, rode westward to Bristol, got on board the ship which Sweyn had built there, and sailed away to find refuge at the court of Diarmid, the Irish king of Leinster, who had lately become master of the Danish district round Dublin.

Edward, probably suspecting that Harold was going westward to hatch some mischief, sent Bishop Aldred with an armed force to overtake the brothers before they could reach Bristol. Clearly the pursuers had little heart for their work. The Chronicle says, with happy ambiguity, "they could not or they would not." At all events Harold escaped. And perhaps Aldred was not sorry to fail in his second military enterprise.

Once more, in 1056, Aldred comes before us as a peace-maker.

Griffith of North Wales, in alliance with a Norse chieftain, Magnus, had invaded Herefordshire. The newly-appointed bishop, Leofgar, a very warlike prelate, went out to meet them. But he was defeated

and killed, and his priests with him, and the sheriff, and many other good men.

This wearisome intermittent warfare with the prince of North Wales had gone on for many years, and could lead to no good. Therefore, as Freeman puts it: "The wisest heads of the nation agreed that a stop must, at any cost, be put to this state of things." So Harold Godwinson, and Leofric, the venerable earl of Mercia, and our versatile prelate Aldred, negotiated a peace, whereby Griffith promised to be true under-king to his lord King Edward.

These were the three "wisest heads," the three most "able statesmen," of the time. Leofric most undeservedly has got a bad name as the tyrant husband of the Lady Godiva of Coventry. He was, in fact, the wisest and most patriotic of Englishmen. He was always striving for peace in troublous times, being ready to sacrifice personal gain for the public good. When he died, in 1057, the chronicler wrote of him, "He was very wise for God and also for the world (*i.e.* in politics), which was a blessing to all this nation."

Truly it was a privilege for our Aldred to be associated on equal terms with such men as Leofric and Harold; and it is pleasant, on the eve of the Norman Conquest, to see our brave old English race represented by three such good and able men as these.

## CHAPTER IX.

*ALDRED THE TRAVELLER AND DIPLOMATIST.*

ALDRED was not only a church-reformer and a soldier, he was also the greatest diplomatist and the greatest traveller of his time.

In 1054, the year of Macbeth's defeat, he was sent to Cologne to deal with the Emperor, Henry III., for the return of Edward the Outlaw, the son of Edmund Ironsides, from his long exile in Hungary.

On the death of Edmund, his sons had been entrusted to Canute's half-brother, Olaf of Sweden, to be got rid of. Olaf, unwilling to stain his hands with their blood, passed them on to Stephen of Hungary, the royal saint, who, with mingled force and persuasion, was turning into settled peaceable Christians the pagan hordes of Tartar origin, that in the previous century had been the scourge of eastern Europe, as the Danes had been of the west.

St. Stephen took charge of the young princes, and brought them up in a way befitting their rank. But on Stephen's death there was a re-action, as there always will be when reforms are pressed upon an unready people.

For a time, there was a return to the old paganism; then, civil war between the two parties. This checked the friendly relations that had begun to exist between the new Christian kingdom and the Christian Empire of the West, and intercourse with Hungary became rare and difficult. Owing to this, Aldred's mission did not bear fruit until 1057; and

then, Edward only returned to die a few days after his arrival in London, and to be praised and bemoaned, with an outburst of song in the old English Chronicle, as the last hope of the English dynasty.

Aldred, however, had done his duty in the matter ; and in his long stay at the imperial court, he became intimate with the great archbishop Hermann, and no doubt his love for church building and church reform was partly due to his friendship with that magnificent prelate. The Chronicle says "he was received with much worship by the emperor, and there he dwelt well-nigh a year ; and either gave him entertainment, both the bishop of Cologne and the emperor."

In 1059, just when Robert Guiscard had established Norman rule in South Italy, Aldred, having put things in order at home, made the longest journey of his life. Passing through Germany and Hungary, where order was now restored, and through the weak but still wide-spread Eastern Empire, he reached Jerusalem in safety ; being the first English bishop to visit the holy sepulchre. "He went," the Chronicle says, "to Jerusalem with such splendour as none had displayed before him, and there devoted himself to God ; and a worthy gift also he offered at the tomb of our Lord, that was a golden chalice of five marks of very wonderful work."

In fact, Aldred was a Crusader before the Crusades. From the time of Constantine, pilgrimages to the Holy Land were ever growing in favour. They increased greatly at the close of the tenth century, from the wide-spread belief that the world would end



in the year 1000; and the fashion once set lasted on into the next century. Hitherto, with slight exceptions, pilgrims had merely run the risks of travel in a turbulent time; for the Saracens welcomed Christian pilgrims as an innocent source of revenue. But the Seljukian Turks had the fierce fanaticism of new converts. They would not tolerate the sight of unbelievers in the holy places; and their cruel treatment of pilgrims, set forth with the fiery eloquence of Peter the hermit, fanned into flame the smouldering fanaticism of western Christendom, and sent wave after wave of Crusaders to break their strength on the coast of Syria.

Jerusalem was not taken by the Turks until 1065. But already they were masters of Bagdad, and their approach increased the prevalent anarchy to such an extent, that when the archbishop of Mentz and three other bishops, with 7000 followers, visited the Holy Land in 1064, they were attacked by Bedouins, besieged in a fortress at Capernaum, and so ill-treated that only 2000 returned in safety.

Aldred, with his usual good fortune, escaped these dangers. Had he but written a diary of his journey! How we should like to be with him in Germany, as he hears, at first hand, the cause of the emperor Henry IV. against the ever-encroaching pretensions of Hildebrand and Rome, the cause of the Ghibelins against the Guelphs. Of scarcely less interest would it be to witness with him the dying struggles of paganism, and the gradual welding together of alien races in the Magyars and Slavs of Hungary; to see for ourselves the relics of Roman civilization at Constantinople, sinking into ever deeper depths of



imbecility under the enervating influences of eastern luxury; to compare, on the spot, the debased superstition, that still called itself Christian, with the religion of Mahomet, and so find the clue to the sad mystery of the Crescent conquering the Cross.

All these things our Aldred saw, and thought over, and kept in his mind, and explained to himself, with that mixture of Christian devotion and worldly wisdom in which he was so pre-eminent. We may well regret that he has left us no written picture of what he saw.

In this matter of pilgrimages, it is well to observe a striking proof of the continuity of our English history, and the unbroken influence of our religious sentiment: an ex-abbot of Tavistock was visiting the Holy Land in 1059, and an ex-vicar of Tavistock, our friend Mr. Tait, is visiting the Holy Land in this year of grace, 1887.\*

## CHAPTER X.

### *ALDRED AND POPE NICHOLAS II.*

KYNSEY, archbishop of York, died in December, 1060. Aldred was chosen at once to fill his place by the Witan, sitting then at Gloucester. He gave up the bishopric of Hereford, but kept that of Worcester, as some of his predecessors had done before him.

Hereford was given to Walter, a Lorrainer; and soon after, the bishopric of the Somersætas was given to Giso, another Lorrainer; these appointments being probably due, as we have seen, to Harold's

\* When this chapter first appeared in the *Tavistock Parish Magazine*.

effort to counteract, with German influence, the Norman-French bias of the King. This Giso tried to introduce the stricter German discipline at Wells, just as Leofric had tried at Exeter, and with the same result; for, on the death of these bishops, the canons of both cities returned directly to their secular way of living.

Stigand of Canterbury being under papal suspension, Walter and Giso had to journey to Rome to be consecrated, and, of course, Aldred had to go there for his pallium.

The two bishops\* seem to have gone by sea from Marseilles. Aldred went through the beautiful Rhineland and over the Alps, with as goodly a company of fellow pilgrims as any man could wish. He had with him the generous, hot-headed Tostig, and the faithful Gyrth, the two brothers of Harold who had left their great earldoms of Northumbria and East Anglia to go on pilgrimage, and who in five years' time were to die, the one fighting against Harold at Stamford-bridge, and the other by Harold's side at Hastings.

Tostig had brought with him his wife, Judith of Flanders, and many of the chief thanes of his earldom; whilst Aldred had, as his special charge, Burhard, the grandson of his old friend Leofric of Mercia; Burhard, who was to die on the way home at Rheims, and so escape the sorrow and shame that fell upon his brothers Edwin and Morcar.

This visit happened at an important crisis in the growth of the Roman power. Nicholas II. was pope, but Hildebrand was the ruling spirit in Rome.

\* FREEMAN'S *Conquest*, vol. ii. p. 454.

Under his influence, Nicholas had just set the papal supremacy on a firm basis, by limiting the right of election to the cardinals, and by a treaty of friendship with the conquering Normans in Calabria. By this policy the popes were protected alike from German interference, and from the turbulence of their own subjects.

But Hildebrand was as eager for clerical discipline as for papal supremacy. When the English pilgrims arrived, Nicholas was presiding over a synod which was sitting in judgment upon the growing evil of simony. Our bishops, Walter and Giso, were examined and consecrated, and sent back to England, bearing with them the pope's confirmation of all the privileges, which, through them and Aldred, King Edward had begged for his new minster. Tostig also, and the English nobles, were well received and handsomely entertained.

It was not so with Aldred. An ill report must have gone before him. He was charged with ignorance and breach of the canon law, and, yet worse, with simony; and not only was he refused the pallium, but he was even deprived of his episcopal rank.

Tostig, sending forward Judith and part of his retinue, stayed behind on purpose to intercede for his friend; but it was all to no purpose, and our poor Aldred had started homeward, humiliated and confounded, when an unexpected calamity wrought his deliverance.

The sad and diminished company had not gone far before they were set upon by one of the robber nobles of the country: perhaps the same count of

Galeria who had robbed Stigand a few years earlier. The pilgrims returned to Rome utterly destitute, having left the young thane Gospatric as a hostage in the hands of the brigands. Their extremity was Tostig's opportunity. Coming boldly into the pope's presence he rated him soundly for his miserable government. All England should know that he, who could play the part of an unmerciful tyrant toward strangers, could not control his own subjects at his own doors. When this was known in England there would be no more Peter's pence, no more Rome-Scot, no more pilgrimages.

Tostig's threats availed more than his prayers, and the pall was given to Aldred, on the simple condition that he gave up the see of Worcester.

Such a public disgrace must have been a dreadful blow to a man of Aldred's power and eminence. But he got out of the trouble with his usual good fortune; and, on his return, as if to show how groundless these charges were, having assisted in the appointment of the saintly Wulstan to his old bishopric, he spent himself and his substance in restoring the discipline, and beautifying the churches, of his northern province.

## CHAPTER XI.

*ALDRED AND THE CONQUEROR.*

THE year 1066 was the great crisis of our national life. It was then settled that England was not to be a German Empire in miniature, divided into many principalities under a nominal head, but one strong, united kingdom.

It was indeed by the hard, cruel blows of the Conqueror that we were, at first, welded into one; but the unity was secured by his new policy, developed and completed by Henry II.; and the grand struggle for liberty in the thirteenth century made us really one people in heart and purpose, and prepared us to take, in the fourteenth century, that forward place in the world's history which, except for short intervals, we have held ever since.

Our Aldred was closely connected with this great crisis; for it is almost certain that he crowned Harold, and it is quite certain that he crowned William.

Like a true patriot, Aldred held out as long as possible, longer than the English Chronicler thought wise. He was in London after Hastings, planning resistance with such leaders as were left. But when the incapacity of Childe Edgar,\* and the desertion of Edwin and Morcar, showed that the struggle was hopeless, and when the tide of Norman devastation had surged past London into the Midlands—feeling that Norman rule was better than no rule, and

\* His title in the Chronicles.

doubtless hoping that William would prove a second Canute, Aldred headed the deputation that waited upon the Conqueror at Berkhamstead to offer him the crown and do him homage.

From his homage, once given, Aldred never drew back. He was as true to William as he had been to Edward or Harold, and he held a high position at the Norman court.

On Whit-Sunday, 1068, he placed the queen's crown on the head of Matilda, thus restoring to the king's consort the title and the dignity which had been forfeited by the misconduct of Eadburga, queen of the West Saxons, in the year 800. Later in 1068 Aldred was in York, trying by every means to check the first outburst of disaffection against the Conqueror.

But whilst true to his king, he was also true to his country. Being summoned as patron of the church of Worcester to protect its interests against the encroachments of the Norman sheriff, Urse of Abetot, he visited the scenes of his former labours, and in a personal interview rebuked the sheriff, in words interesting alike as an early specimen of ecclesiastical malediction and of English rhyme: "Hightest thou Urse, Have thou God's curse." So the actual words used have come down to us, with a long addition in Latin. And the curse was fulfilled; for Urse died soon after, and his son Ralph forfeited all his lands to Henry I. for his violence and misrule.

In the spring of 1069 the lawlessness of the Norman barons came close home to Aldred. He was keeping feast at York during Pentecost. His waggons were bringing in provisions from his farms.

They were met at the gates of the city by William Malet, the sheriff. Although he was told that the supplies were for the archbishop, the sheriff bid his followers drive them off for the use of the Norman garrison.

Aldred, having threatened Malet to no purpose, set off for London. The clergy and people met him with honourable welcome, and conducted him for prayers first to St. Paul's, then to St. Peter's at Westminster.

William was keeping his court in the adjoining palace. Aldred went boldly into his presence, and proclaimed aloud that he had come to curse rightfully the king whom, misled by his promise of good government, he had wrongfully blessed at his coronation. The stern Conqueror, so the York\* annalist says, left his chair of state to fall at Aldred's feet and ask wherein he had offended. The courtiers denounced the arrogance of the archbishop. "Let him alone," cried Aldred, "he kneels not at my feet, but at the feet of St. Peter, whose vicar I am." Then raising the king, he told his grievance. William promised immediate restitution. Aldred withdrew the threatened curse, and returned to York with much comfort and worship.

But far heavier troubles were in store for the north country. When in the autumn of 1069 English and Danish ships of war met in the Humber, a general rising in Northumbria was certain.

Aldred, who knew how useless the rising would be, how dreadful the stern vengeance of the Conqueror, prayed that he might die before the evil came. His

\* See FREEMAN'S *Conquest*, vol. iv. pp. 261-264, and 823.



prayer was granted ; and ere the Anglo-Danish army approached the walls of York, the archbishop was laid in his last resting-place in the minster.

The event surpassed his fears. The outbreak was suppressed, the Danes were bought off, and William traversed Yorkshire and the neighbouring counties not to pillage, but to destroy. Villages and towns were burnt, the people were slaughtered or driven to the hills to die of want, and the whole country became a neglected "waste."

This barbarity has left an indelible stain on William's memory ; and the wrong done was so grievous, that the wasted districts scarcely recovered their due share of prosperity till the working of the coal mines almost in our own time. It is no wonder that Englishmen, groaning under Norman tyranny, with foreigners filling every place of trust in Church and State, should cherish the memory and magnify the exploits of the native prelate who dared rebuke the Conqueror. With them we may be content to overlook any stains of worldly ambition or personal greed, and as we take our leave of Aldred, think of him only as the trustworthy peace-maker, the energetic statesman, the broad-minded church reformer, the true-hearted patriot.



## CHAPTER XII.

### *ABBOT SIHTRIC AND THE SEE OF EXETER.*

TAVISTOCK could not expect a succession of abbots so distinguished as Lyfing and Aldred. When Lyfing died in 1046, Aldred succeeded him in the bishopric of Worcester, and Leofric in the combined sees of Crediton and St. Germans, whilst Sihtric took Aldred's place as abbot of Tavistock.

Like Aldred before him, Sihtric\* farmed some of the abbey lands himself. The arable land at Plymstock was four carucates. Of these, Sihtric kept one in tillage, by the help of the five serfs of the demesne, and the customary labour of the four villeins and nine cottagers, who cultivated the other three carucates.

Sihtric held Plymstock on easy terms, for at the time of the Domesday Survey it was worth twice as much as in the days of the Confessor; namely, forty shillings instead of twenty.

It is pleasant to picture our abbot exchanging the cares of the cloister for the fresh and varied interests of the farm; and we are apt to fancy that he was none the worse as a guide and ruler of men, because he spent some thought on improving the land.

If Abbot Sihtric was not a very notable man, he lived in very eventful times; for his tenure of office, from 1046 to 1082, reached from the fifth year of Edward the Confessor, through the short and

\* *Exon Domesday*, in DUGDALE and OLIVER; and now translated by the Devonshire Association.

troubled reign of Harold, to the seventeenth year of the Conqueror. And by that time, after an agony of suffering, by form of law mixed with much lawlessness, the old aristocracy of England had been supplanted by Norman rivals, and both in church and state, the old order of things, for better and for worse, had given place to the new.

In 1070, assisted by legates from Rome, William began those church reforms, which, carried out slowly and warily, ended in getting rid of English bishops, and many English abbots, to make room for Normans.

Archbishop Stigand was one of the first victims, and Ethelnoth, abbot of Glastonbury, was another; the latter making way for a tyrant Thurstan, who shed the blood of his monks in their own church. Hermann, bishop of Sherborne, and Giso of Wells, were spared, because they were Lorrainers by birth; and Leofric of Exeter was looked upon by William as a friend, because he was a Lorrainer by education, and had already, like the other two, introduced the stricter continental discipline amongst his canons.

That Sihtric continued abbot of Tavistock until his death in 1082 was probably owing to the friendship of his bishop, as well as to his own prudence. It is most likely that both bishop and abbot sided with the popular party in 1068, when the power of the Normans had not yet been felt in the west country; and Exeter, with Harold's mother within her walls, headed a confederacy that dreamt of dictating terms to the Conqueror. But when, after eighteen days' siege, Exeter was taken and the castle was built on Rougemont for a Norman garrison, wise

men knew that loyal submission was the truest patriotism; and we may be sure that neither Leofric nor Sihtric were on the side of the insurgents in the futile outbreak of 1069.

The friendship between bishop and abbot was of long standing, and leads us back to the one public event in which we know that Sihtric took part. Leofric naturally wished to connect his see with the chief city of his diocese, as was usual on the continent. Therefore he sent a messenger to Pope Leo IX. begging him to suggest to Edward the Confessor the removal of the see to Exeter.

The king, more than half-foreign in education and tastes, and being anxious to meet the wishes of Leofric, his friend and at one time his chancellor, entered eagerly into the scheme. To give it all possible honour, he seems to have held a meeting of his Witan\* at Exeter in 1050. So there were gathered there two archbishops and many bishops and abbots to represent the church, and the king with his Norman courtiers and the great earls and the neighbouring thanes and perhaps the leading citizens to represent the state; though indeed before the conquest there was no thought of church and state needing separate representation, for their interests were held to be one, and both were content to be legislated for by one national assembly, and to have justice administered for all alike in the common law courts.

In November, 1887, the partial undoing of Leofric's work was celebrated with great pomp at the opening of Truro cathedral.

\* FREEMAN'S *History of Exeter*, p. 32.

We have few particulars of the ceremony at Exeter in 1050, and it took place in the old church of the monastery of St. Peter, which Leofric was content to make his cathedral. But the installation of the bishop must have been more imposing than anything at Truro; for, with all the great men of the realm gathered round them, the king and the Lady Edith, taking the one his right hand and the other his left, conducted Leofric to the altar of his own church, and placed him in the seat appointed for him. So says the charter which describes the event, and formally unites the dioceses of Devon and Cornwall in the see of Exeter. To this charter our abbot Sihtric's name was attached as witness, so that we know he was there and took part in the ceremony.

In our own solemn undoing, after eight hundred years, of so solemn an act of union, we see once more the continuity of English history, and also a ground of hope that all wholesome reforms will get done at last, though we may have to wait long for them.

## Book II.

### CHAPTER I.

#### *HOW MEN LIVED IN THE ABBEY.\**

NOW let us spend a day with the monks of Tavistock eight hundred years ago. We must remember they belong to the Benedictine order, which Dunstan had striven hard to spread all over England; and it was the special rule of St. Benedict to add work to worship, to save religious men from the dangers of spiritual reaction by the "blessed exercise of the body."

The minster bell† summons them to church at midnight. There are prayers and psalms, and some chapters of the Latin Bible are read, and whilst they

\* This is chiefly gathered from MAITLAND'S *Dark Ages* and SAUNDERS'S *Cabinet Pictures of English Life*. For a more detailed and lively picture I must refer to Dr. JESSOP'S *Daily Life in a Mediæval Monastery*, republished from the *Contemporary Review*, in his *Coming of the Friars and other Essays*. I had not read this when I wrote my paper.

† From the fifth century the canonical hours were: Matins, at 3 a.m.; prime, at 6 a.m.; terce, at 9 a.m.; sext, at noon; nones, at 3 p.m.; vespers, at 6 p.m.; compline, at 9 p.m., and vigils, at midnight. These hours were all supposed to be strictly observed in monasteries, and those who could not attend were to bow the knee in godly fear. But Benedict had allowed a certain elasticity in his rules, according to expediency; and monks, being still men, soon began to avail themselves of this liberty. Compare KURTZ'S *Church History*, pp. 354 and 505 (Hodder and Stoughton), and MAITLAND'S *Dark Ages*, p. 380, for Peter of Clugni's answer to St. Bernard's charge of breaking the rules of St. Benedict.

are being read, the prior creeps about with his dark lantern to see if any careless brother is sleeping.

After the six o'clock service there is a light breakfast, and then the monks go cheerily to their work, pouring forth from the church in their black gowns like a swarm of bees.

Those who are fitted for outdoor work are busy in the garden and the orchard, tending the flowers and vegetables, or pruning the avenues and arcades, which are the favourite walks of the more thoughtful brethren ; whilst others till the land, or look after the cattle in the home farm. Some are providing for the day's wants, fetching flour from the mill and fish from the store ponds in the abbey mead. Others collect the rents due to the abbey, or the tolls for keeping up the market and the bridge. Silently the brethren work, or only break the silence with the singing of psalms or canticles ; and withal they are far the best gardeners and husbandmen in this part of Devon.

Meanwhile there is plenty of work to be done indoors. The carpenters are busy in their workshop, and the masons and stone-carvers with the never-ending, pleasant labour of improving and beautifying the church. Writers and artists find delightful occupation copying and illuminating in the scriptorium, a large room fitted up with desks for the purpose, and probably placed near the calefactory or heating-room of the minster. To these patient scribes we owe it that portions of scripture were multiplied, and the treasures of classic literature were preserved, before the invention of printing.

We have a kindred industry in the schools, which

had formed a chief part of monastic duty ever since good King Alfred's time. Two or three of our monks are teaching the elements of religion, and reading and writing, to the children of the poor; whilst others instruct the sons of the gentry in Latin, music, and rhetoric. Clearly the monasteries filled the place of our modern schools of all grades, as well as that of the relieving officer of the poor. Moreover, the schoolmaster's work was held to be so important that he was even excused attendance at church, on the plea that teaching was his best service.

The monks were doctors as well as teachers. Here is one busy in the still-house,\* making soothing draughts from the medicinal herbs grown on purpose in the neighbouring garden; whilst others wait to carry the draughts to the sick poor of the town, or to the weakly brethren in their own infirmary.

At 9 a.m. the minster bell calls to the service of terce, and those who cannot attend, because of work or distance, bend the knee for a moment in worship. The same rule applies to the other daily services at noon, at 3 p.m., and 6 p.m., called sext, nones, and vespers. About an hour before noon, all who choose may leave work and go to the library for books, which the librarian (*armarius*) distributes amongst them. The commentaries of Origen and Gregory, the *de Consolatione* of Boëthius, the works of Augustine, and the letters of Jerome, are the chief favourites; and reading them, on the sunny side of the cloisters, or in the shade of the orchard, according

\* This is a small tower at the south-west corner of what used to be the abbey precincts. It overlooks the Tavy, and is a pleasant adjunct to the vicarage gardens.



to the season, the brethren wile away the time till the mid-day service. After this, comes dinner, a great event in so quiet a life. Then all, with eyes on the ground, walk slowly to the refectory, as if they were not hungry at all, though they have eaten nothing since last evening. The warden of the guests (and they are many, for all strangers are welcome to board and lodging), leads them to the abbot's table ; and the monk, whose week it is, reads aloud from the Apocrypha, the morals of St. Gregory, or St. Augustine's *City of God*, whilst the brethren enjoy their frugal meal of fish and vegetables and bread and fruit and wine.

Dinner over, there is the washing of the feet of pilgrims ; and then all may spend the time till the three o'clock service in rest and refreshment, sleeping or reading in the cloisters, or meditating in the garden.

From three to six the monks are busy again at their appointed work. At six they crowd to church, once more, for vespers. Then follows a very simple supper of a pound of bread and what is left of the three-quarters of a pint of wine allowed them at dinner.

Once more, at 9 p.m., the bell summons to church for compline ; and now the gates of the precincts are shut, and work outside is no longer an excuse for absence. After this they go to the dormitory to enjoy, we hope, sound and peaceful sleep, though their only bedding is a rush mat and the flannel tunic and serge gown which form their every-day habit.

If all Benedictines had lived always such devout, unselfish, useful lives, they would have claimed our admiration, even if they had not nurtured such



missionaries as Boniface, such champions of liberty as Lanfranc, such philosophers as Anselm, and such interpreters of the soul's needs as Thomas à Kempis.

## CHAPTER II.

### *ABBOT GEOFFREY AND DOMESDAY.\**

GEOFFREY, or Gaufridus, succeeded Sihtric in 1082, and died in 1088; so that he was abbot when the Domesday Survey was made in 1086. This wonderful record tells us more about England, its people and their classes, its soil, with the uses and boundaries thereof, than we know for centuries earlier or later.

It was determined upon at an "earnest talk" (parlement) of William with his wise men at Gloucester, Christmas, 1085. Canute of Sweden had been threatening invasion for some time. It was necessary if possible to increase the Danegeld, or land tax, for resisting the Danes; and also to put the country into a better state of defence by re-organizing its military system; and an accurate knowledge of the value of the land was needed for both purposes.

William failed in his first object; for the Survey proved that the land was worth less than it had been twenty years before, at the death of Edward the Confessor. This falling off was due to the heavy exactions of the Conqueror, and to the pitiless wasting of those towns and districts which had been most strenuous in their resistance. Amongst these, Lydford claims

\* *Domesday Book* by BIRCH, S. P. C. K., and FREEMAN'S *Norman Conquest*, chap. xxii.

an honourable place ; for of its sixty-nine houses of burgesses forty were lying waste in 1086.

But if Domesday disappointed the Conqueror's greed, it did enable him to reorganise his military system ; and in August, 1086, all considerable land-owners, whether tenants-in-chief or sub-tenants, were required to do him homage in a great parliament at Salisbury. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle gives the following account of this important event under the year 1086, and incidentally it gives us a striking picture of William's wonderful energy : "In this year the king bare his crown, and held his court, in Winchester, at Easter ; and so he went that he was by Pentecost at Westminster, and dubbed his son Henry a knight there. After that he went about, so that he came by Lammas to Salisbury ; and there his 'witan' came to him, and all the landholders that were of account over all England, be they the men of what man they might ; and they all submitted to him and were his men, and swore to him oaths of fealty, that they would be faithful to him against all other men. Thence he went to Wight, because he would go to Normandy, and afterwards did so." By this means everyone of any importance became the king's man. Thus the power of the feudal aristocracy was effectually checked ; and this, in the end, proved to be a greater advantage to the people than to the king.

Domesday shows that William had the same object in view in the large gifts of land made to his followers. His grants are large, but they are scattered. Thus his half-brother, Robert of Mortain, is made Earl of Cornwall, with 793 manors ; but the manors are spread over twenty counties. The Survey

also proves that William, stern and strong-willed as he was, did not heedlessly break in upon the history or the laws and customs of his new land. The great landowners are indeed all Normans, but a large proportion of the smaller ones are English. French and English are often distinguished by name; but all alike hold their land by English law and subject to English customs. This keeping to old usages, in the midst of violent changes, probably gave little comfort to the downtrodden English at the time. But it prepared the way for the recovery of our liberties; for our patriots of the thirteenth century, like the patriots of the seventeenth century after the Tudor tyranny, had but to give life to the forms of freedom, which, as a people, we had never lost.

Domesday shows the continuity of our geography as well as of our history. The boundaries of shires and hundreds, with very slight exceptions, were the same then as now; and any alterations, for the sake of local government, will disturb a settlement that was made, for the most part, a thousand years ago.

The exact meaning of measures of land and of the titles of classes in Domesday is still disputed by the learned. Usually a manor consisted of open pasturelands; of wood, where the swineherds (*porcarii*) fed their hogs on the mast, paying their rent in kind; and of the arable land, divided by balks into acres, or half-acres, forty rods in length, for convenience in ploughing. Some part of this land was usually held by the lord in demesne. The remainder was cultivated, mostly by the villeins or bures, the old English

\* See Sir J. B. PHEAR, in *Trans. of Dev. Ass.* vol. xviii. pp. 34, 39; FREEMAN'S *Norman Conquest*, vol. i. pp. 89, 96; vol. v. pp. 476, 888.

ceorls, who had been, for some time, steadily losing their independence; and, in smaller portions, by the bordarii or cottagers.

Of the 17,434 reported as the population of Devonshire 77 were tenants-in-chief, 400 sub-tenants, about 5000 cottier tenants of one class or another, 8070 were villeins, 3294 serfs or slaves, and 294 swineherds and others.

As to our abbey, Domesday gives it two manors in Dorset, six in Cornwall (besides four that the Earl of Mortain is said to have unjustly seized), and sixteen in Devon. These altogether were worth a great amount of our present money, and made Tavistock one of the richest abbeys in Devonshire.

There is no record of mines or fisheries on the Cornish manors. But at Rame, besides one carucate kept in hand with four serfs or slaves, and three carucates farmed, in the usual co-operative way, by four villeins and fifteen cottagers, there were thirty acres of open pasture, and ten acres of coppice wood (*silvæ minutæ*). One Erminhald held of the abbey all six manors in Cornwall, as well as some acres in the manor of Tavistock.

Most of its other manors the abbey kept in hand; but six of those in Devonshire were let to Geoffrey, Ralf, William, Nigel, Rainald, and Grento, whose names seem to bespeak them Normans or Frenchmen.

The abbot had his town house at Exeter, paying eightpence a year to the king for it, "according to custom."

At Tavistock there was a mill, which as usual paid dues to the lord of the manor; *i.e.*, to the abbot.

Within the manor itself there was some extent of

pasture, and wood three miles long by one-and-a-half wide. A large portion of the land was held by certain knights, Ralph and Robert, and Godfrey and Hugo, and was worth £5 a year to them. These also were Normans, to judge by their names, and probably filled the place of the four thanes who were attached to the abbey in the days of Edward the Confessor. There were also military tenants in the manor of Adrelie, holding under the abbey.

### CHAPTER III.

#### *ABBOT GUIMUND\* AND SIMONY.*

OUR next abbot, Guimund, held office from 1088 to 1102. He lived in a time when the influence of the corrupt and profane court of William Rufus was bringing worldliness and selfishness into the church. Guimund had the questionable honour of receiving a benefice from Rufus. In 1102 he was deposed for simony, by the king's saintly opponent, Archbishop Anselm.

In the year 1096 Walcaline, bishop of Winchester, and others of the king's council, whilst hearing his pleas in Devonshire, decided that the manor (*mansio*) of Wlerintun (Werrington) really belonged to the abbey on the Tavy (*Abbacie Taviensi*), and not to the royal domain. This judgment being made known to the king, Rufus—most probably stimulated by a present from Abbot Guimund—confirmed the judgment, and gave the manor “to God and Saint Mary and the Church of Tavistock, for the souls of his

\* He is also called Wymund.

father and mother and himself."\* He completed the gift in open court by presenting Guimund with an ivory-handled knife with this inscription: "I, King William, have given to God and to St. Mary of Tavistock the land of Wlerintun." Besides Bishop Walcaline, John, bishop of Bath, and Thurstan, abbot of Glastonbury, were witnesses; and the knife was laid up in the shrine of St. Rumon. It seems to us that William takes much credit to himself for giving up what his own judges declared did not belong to him.

Profane and reckless as Rufus was, he had respect for his father's memory, he could be generous, he respected the code of military honour, and he was overawed by the fear of death. Under this fear, in 1093, after enjoying the revenues of Canterbury during a four-years' vacancy, he appointed Anselm, the saint, scholar, and philosopher, to fill the chair of Lanfranc the statesman. Probably, like many other sick-bed penitents, Rufus really meant to reform himself and his government. Under wise guidance, his lower impulses might have been kept in check, as they were in Lanfranc's time. But Anselm had none of Lanfranc's worldly prudence. He offended the king, beyond all hope of reconciliation, by an assumption of equality and by lecturing him at inconvenient times.

Anselm retired to the continent in 1096, and Rufus was left to himself, only made more reckless by heedless opposition. In the church, things went from bad to worse. Bishoprics and abbacies were kept vacant or sold to the highest bidder. Following the example of their superiors, the clergy at large

\* DUGDALE, num. v.

thought more of the law and the civil service, than of their religious ministrations. Since the jurisdictions of the church and the state were separated at the Conquest, the superior clergy could only be called to account in a synod. A synod could only be summoned by the king. Rufus would not issue the summons at Anselm's request. And so, unworthy abbots went their own way, till Rufus was killed in the New Forest, and his place was taken by the hard, astute, law-abiding Henry Beauclerk. Then, Anselm returned from the continent and threw all the weight of his great influence into the cause of Henry and his English wife, against Robert of Normandy; though Robert was a warrior of the cross, and had just returned from the first Crusade.

Henry was perhaps less likely to be touched, even than Rufus, by the great religious movement of the time—the Crusades; which, with all their waste of blood and treasure, did much to advance freedom and civilization by opening men's minds, by swallowing up small personal quarrels in one great purpose, and, especially, by increasing the importance of the people and the towns against the overwhelming influence of the nobles and their castles.

Certainly, Henry had enough to do in reforming abuses at home. A great synod was held at Westminster in 1102. To give force to its decisions, at Anselm's suggestion, the chief laymen of the country (*primates regni*) were invited to take part in it.\* So that Anselm was less jealous of lay interference than many of the clergy of our own day.

This synod first made celibacy "the universal law"

\* FREEMAN'S *Conquest*, vol. v. p. 221, from Eadmer.



of the English church.\* It denounced all traffic in slaves. It required the clergy to wear garments of one colour, and shoes according to order. As if anticipating evils to come, it ordered that tithes should only be given to churches ; and that no church should be consecrated until necessary provision had been made for the church and its priest. But especially it insisted that the heresy of simony should be severely punished, and under this article were deposed many abbots (nine, Florence says) both French and English, either for obtaining their preferments dishonestly, or for living unrighteously in them. Amongst the deposed abbots, besides those of Cerne in Dorset and Muchelney in Somerset, were Guimund of Tavistock, as well as Goodric of Peterborough, Richard of Ely, and Robert of St. Edmunds.

Osbern, bishop of Exeter, was prevented by sickness from attending the synod ; but it is not likely he could have said much for our abbot. Probably Guimund was guilty on both charges. The grant of Wlerintun shows that he knew how to be in the bad king's favour. As this was only to be secured by handsome presents, it is not unlikely that Guimund had already used this means to obtain his preferment. As to his conduct in his preferment, besides the general charge of misbehaviour, we have a charter of Henry I., about the year 1120, in which the king orders to be restored "to the domain of our Church of Tavistock Rueberge and Cudelipe, which Guimund unjustly bestowed on his brother William."†

\* See FREEMAN, as above ; and FULLER'S *Church History of Britain*, A.D. 1102.

† Inspecimus 22 Edward iii. in DUGDALE and OLIVER.



Undoubtedly Guimund deserved his sentence of deposition. His story is a sad one. It shows how surely the influence of those in high places affects for good or evil the country at large. It also shows how an enthusiast, like Anselm, for want of tact, may delay for years the very reforms which he has most at heart.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *ABBOT OSBERT AND THE ISLES OF SCILLY.*

OUR next abbot Osbert (1102-1131) received a grant from Henry I., of all the church property in the isles of Scilly—Sully—as they were called then, which meant, perhaps, isles of the sun. This is a title they well deserve at all events; for whether we think of the semi-tropical plants in the gardens at Tresco, or the beautiful bays and granite headlands of St. Mary's, of the green islets to the eastward, or of the innumerable rocks, with the clearest sea-water flashing around them, to the north and west, we have a picture of a bright sunny land not to be matched anywhere in the United Kingdom. And, as such a land should, it takes the first place in equability of climate, its mean temperature being 57 in summer, and 45 in winter. Perhaps, however, it ought to be said that Dr. Oliver, in his notice of the priory of St. Nicholas, rather inclines to Mr. Couch's theory that the name is due to the provincial name for the conger-eel—selyx.

These isles were visited, about A.D. 930, by King Athelstan, who probably settled a colony of monks

there. At least Henry I.\* granted as a perpetual gift to Osbert the abbot and to the church of Tavistock, and to Tuold their monk, all the churches of Sully and their appurtenances, and the land as the monks, or hermits rather, held it in the time of Edward the Confessor. Tuold, who was probably sent there as prior, and his monks are to hold it in peace as the king's prebendaries. Presently, Reginald, the king's son and earl of Cornwall, for the soul of himself and his father, confirms to the monks of Sully all wreck upon their islands, except a whale or a whole ship.

A decision, *de quo warranto*, of 1301, 30 Edward I., excepts also gold, scarlet cloth, and ermine. When, in 1890, the fragment of the ancient church at Old Town was altered and enlarged, a Norman arch was disclosed, which is very likely as old as the charter of Henry.

From Earl Reginald's deed of gift we learn that the islands held by the monks, and therefore belonging to the abbey of Tavistock, were St. Elidius,† now St. Helen's, St. Sampson, and St. Teona, now Sampson and Tean, Rentemen, probably the same as St. Nicholas now Tresco, and Nurcho probably Bryer. In 1180, Bartholomew, bishop of Exeter, confirms a charter of Richard de Wicha, also called Richarde de Sully, in which confessing that he has

\* For particulars here given see DUGDALE, num. xviii., xix., xx., xxi., and xxiv., and OLIVER, p. 73.

† William of Worcester found in the calendar of our abbey in 1478 this entry: "Saint Elidius, bishop, 8 day of August, lies in the isle of Scilly (in insula Syllys)." Sully, or Syilly, being used for the whole group, and also, as here, for the island on which the priory stood. See OLIVER, p. 73, and BORLASE, p. 107.

kept back tithes of Sully, and especially of the rabbits, as not knowing they were due, he now grants them for ever to the abbot and convent of Tavistock and to the brethren of the monastery of the blessed confessor, Nicholas of Sully.

In 1193 Pope Celestin III. confirms all its privileges and properties to the abbey of Tavistock, and amongst them, within the isles of Scilly, the isles of St. Nicholas, St. Sampson, St. Elidius, St. Theona the virgin, and an island called Nutho (Nurcho), with their belongings, and all churches and oratories in all the isles, with tithes and offerings, besides two bits of wooded land in Aganas (Hagness, now St. Agnes), and three in Ennor ("big island," now St. Mary's). The latter must have been "Holy Vale," which is the only wooded land in St. Mary's. The abbot is to be protected in his possessions against all assailants, his bishop in particular; and for this exemption our abbey has to pay yearly to the Roman pontiff three golden pieces.

As the church property in the isles could barely support the monks and chaplains there, our abbots gained little or no revenue by the grant of Henry I. The islands are not even mentioned in the valuation of the property of the abbey under Henry VIII. But, besides the honour of being sometimes styled the Lords of Sully, they had the privilege of supplying the isles with clergy, and this gave them the means of punishing the refractory or rewarding the deserving, according to the tastes of the monks and the condition of the islands. For, whilst these afforded a most charming residence for contemplative monks in time of peace, in war time food and safety and

life itself, were most precarious. In fact, during the French wars\* of Edward III., the islands were in such distress and poverty that the two monks, who seem to have constituted the whole of the priory, were allowed to stay in Tavistock, finding two secular chaplains to do their duty.

This was in 1345. A little later, in 1367, the priory of St. Nicholas having complained that, for want of proper protection, it was wasted and impoverished by the frequent arrival of the sea-ships of all nations, the king, Edward III., holding the priory in great esteem as a royal foundation, commands all dukes, earls, admirals, soldiers, masters of ships and mariners, and especially "the Constable of his castle in the isle of Ennour," to extend to the prior, monks, chaplains and their servants, all possible protection, so that they may be able to bear their proper burdens, and offer prayers and devotions continually for the king, his progenitors and his heirs, as they had been wont to do.

Once, in the year 1233, and again in 1450, a monk who had become prior of St. Nicholas Tresco, returned to Tavistock as abbot.

Our history was repeating itself six hundred years later under new conditions, when in 1865 a vicar of Tavistock, the Rev. Dr. Tancock, was the means of sending a chaplain to the isles, who in his turn became vicar of Tavistock in 1883.

The close connection between Tavistock and the isles in the middle ages, has been further shown by the recovery of an ancient deed, which Prebendary Hingeston-Randolph assigns without hesitation to

\* BORLASE, *Observations on the Isles of Scilly*, p. 107.

the reign of Edward I. It was lent to Mr. A. J. Kempe in 1830, and, being mislaid, only found its way back to Tavistock in 1890. In this deed, Walter Folke gives to Robert, the son of Bartholomew Ruffi of Scilly (de Sullia), for his homage and service, a messuage in Tavistock, the witnesses being Ralph de Albermarle, William Probus, Adam de Bradele, Joel Mason (cementarius), David la Bloie, Hugo de la Kage (? the constable of the clink), Robert, the vicar of Middeltune (Milton), and many others.

Though our abbey owned many of the isles, yet St. Mary's and St. Agnes, and probably St. Martin's, were always in the hands of laymen. Under Edward I., Ranulph de Blanchminster was constable of the castle of Ennor, and held of the king by the service of twelve armed men and a rent of six and eightpence, or three hundred puffins. Under Henry VI., the heirs of Sir John Colshull held the castle and isles for six and eightpence, or fifty puffins.

At the suppression of the monasteries, the lands in Scilly, owned by our abbey, reverted to the crown, and Queen Elizabeth granted a lease of all the isles to Sir Francis Godolphin for £10 a year. Under his rule, Star Castle and Hugh Town began to be built, and the garrison hill to be fortified; and the isles, which were nearly deserted when Leland visited them under Henry VIII., were repeopled from the mainland. They enjoyed some years of prosperity; and were still in a healthy condition, though somewhat deteriorated, when William Borlase wrote his *Observations* upon them in 1756. After this, their decline was rapid. By many renewals of their lease, the Godolphins held the isles for 260 years, from

1571 to 1831. During this long period the lords proprietors were non-resident. Their agents were not always just and wise; and the "Court of Twelve" was sometimes tyrannical. No check was put on the sub-division of the land, until, for poverty and distress, Scilly became an Ireland in miniature.

In this condition, the isles were let to Mr. Augustus Smith—a liberal in the House of Commons, a benevolent autocrat, a veritable Emperor Augustus, in his island home. The farms were re-divided into moderate holdings, and no sub-division was allowed. Younger sons had the world before them; and, to equip them for it, good schools were provided and attendance made compulsory, long before such a thing was thought of on the mainland. For fifty years, thanks to this *régime* and the native enterprise awakened by it, the isles have exchanged their distressing pauperism for remarkable comfort and well-being. They are a striking example of the difference it makes to tenants, whether their landlord is an absentee, or a wise and energetic resident. Any one who has stayed long enough in the isles to be a judge will endorse the opinion of Borlase in 1756. "The Islanders of both sexes are comely, civil to strangers, and remarkable for speaking good English."\*

\* For a very charming, if somewhat idealized, picture of these beautiful isles I would refer to Mr. Besant's story of *Armored of Lyonesse*. I can speak with authority of the pleasant climate and lovely sea views of this relic of Lyonesse, and of the worth and kindness of the Islanders, as I was resident chaplain at St. Mary's from January 1865 to June 1869. During my stay, I was fortunate enough to discover a very fine new species of sea anemone. I submitted it to Mr. P. Gosse, who discoursed upon it in the *Annals of Natural History*, and called it *Cægeon Alfordi*.

## CHAPTER V.

*ABBOT GEOFFREY II. (?), MILITARY TENANTS,  
AND CHURCH BUILDING.*

OF many of our abbots nothing more than the name survives, but it is very doubtful whether there ever was a second abbot Geoffrey. His name is found in Dugdale, but not in Oliver or Willis. The question is supposed to turn upon some words in the charter of Henry I., which was referred to in treating of Abbot Guimund. The charter is given in Dugdale, and a summary of it will not be out of place here. It shows how carefully the abbey, regarded as a royal foundation, was protected and fostered by the king.

“ Henry, king of England, to William, bishop of Exeter, and to Richard, son of Earl Baldwin, and to all his faithful people in Devon and Cornwall, greeting. I will and bid you and distinctly order that you get transferred to the domain of my church of Tavistock, Rueberge and Cudelipe, which Wymund conveyed unjustly to his brother William. And I forbid any one, besides the monks, to hold these lands hereafter, or any other lands which have belonged to the domain of the church, *except those which Abbot Geoffrey gave* for military service. I also order that this my church of Tavistock shall have and hold all its lands and tenements freely, quietly, and completely; and that no abbot hereafter shall distrain or give any of the land to any one without my approval, and the consent also of the whole chapter. I will also and order, for King William’s soul and my own,



that the hundred of Tavistock be free by itself and undisturbed, and not in any way subject to the hundred of Lifton. Also I grant, as by another charter I have granted, that there be a market on every Friday in the town of Tavistock, and a fair for three days at the festival\* of St. Rumon. And I forbid any buyer or seller to keep back the tolls there, which he is bound to pay in my neighbouring boroughs and cities. Done at Odyham, and witnessed by Ralph, archbishop of Canterbury, by William the king's son, and by Robert, count of Mellent."

The question is, Does the *dedit* mean *gave*, and refer to Geoffrey I., who was abbot in 1082, and, as Domesday shows, had then several knights holding land under him? Or does it mean *has given*, and refer to a later abbot, Geoffrey II.? The only support of Dugdale's invention is, that Domesday, the authority when the first Geoffrey was abbot, has "no distinct mention of military tenure."† In fact, it was Ranulf Flambard, the clever chief justice of William Rufus, who turned this into a regular system; and the division of the whole land into knights' fees was only perfected under Henry I. But, though this is true, it is quite natural that a charter of 1120 should describe the knights (*milites*) who held land under

\* WILLIAM OF WORCESTER, *Itinerary*, translated by Mr. R. N. Worth in *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, 1886, says, p. 15, "St. Rumon, an Irish bishop, lies in a shrine in the abbey church of Tavistock, between the choir and the lady chapel; and his translation day is kept on the 5th day of January, and his obit day is kept on the 28th day of August." But in his *Calendar of the Church of Tavistock Monastery*, p. 21, he says, "Saint Rumon, bishop, 30th day of August." OLIVER, p. 89, says, "His festival used to be kept at Tavistock on the vigil of the Epiphany (Jan. 5) with a fair of three days."

† FREEMAN'S *Norman Conquest*, vol. v. p. 865.



Abbot Geoffrey in 1086, as holding it on military service. Therefore, there seems no sufficient ground for putting a second Abbot Geoffrey between Abbot Osbert and Robert of Plympton.

The bishop of Exeter addressed in the charter is William Warelwast, an active diplomatist under William Rufus, and one of the leaders of the national party against the papal encroachments, represented by Anselm. Consecrated bishop in 1107, he began the Norman cathedral, which was finished by William Marshall a hundred years later, and the remains of which are still to be seen in the transept towers. When a new cathedral was being built from 1280 to 1369, in the Decorated style of the time, these transept towers were retained, and they give its distinctive character to our present cathedral.

We should like to know whether Geoffrey, or any other of our abbots contemporary with William Warelwast, followed his example, and supplanted our old Saxon buildings with more massive and enduring ones in the Norman style.

We do know that, in 1285, Abbot Robert Champeaux, or Campell, rebuilt our abbey church, in the same Decorated style in which the cathedral was being rebuilt; and we can hardly believe that the passion for building, which came over with the Normans, could have left our great abbey untouched till the 14th year of Edward I. Unfortunately, Tavistock, less favoured than Exeter, and even than many country churches, has no relic of Norman times, and the only fragment of the great church of Robert Champeaux is the fine tomb still to be seen in the churchyard.

But if the church has lost all relics of Norman times, the town has not; and every tradesman who does a brisk business here on market days should feel the solemnity of a great antiquity brooding over his bargains, as he remembers that he is indebted for his privileges to Henry Beauclerc, who rescued Tavistock from the encroachments of Lifton. Boys and girls also, who enjoy the sweets and shows of "Goose Fair," might remember with a certain awe, that, though changed by course of time from August to October, their days of merriment may be due\* to a charter nearly eight hundred years old, and be connected with an Irish bishop and saint, who preached and died in Cornwall when Englishmen were still pagans, and whose bones were removed to Tavistock in the time of Ethelred the Unready.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *ROBERT DE PLYMPTON AND SURNAMES.*

ROBERT was abbot of Tavistock from 1131 to 1141, so that he was abbot when Henry I. died. He was also the first of our abbots to bear a surname. This is therefore a good opportunity to say a few words about Henry I., and a few more about surnames.

Henry I., an able soldier at need, but always a statesman, managed to keep under restraint the

\* It is more likely that "Goose Fair" is a relic of the wake of St. Eustachius, the patron saint of our parish church; for his wake was kept a hundred years ago on 20th September, his festival falling on that day. If this is so, our annual fair connects us with one century earlier than St. Rumon, for our Saint Eustachius was, probably, the soldier-martyr of the reign of Hadrian, A.D. 118 to 138.

turbulent forces of his kingdom, and did much to weld together the discordant elements of conquerors and conquered. His marriage with the niece of Edgar Atheling promised a restoration of English feeling at court; and the English soldiers who won for him the battle of Tenchebrai, 1106, wiped out any disgrace that still clung to English arms for the defeat at Hastings.

Towards the close of Henry's reign, it looked as if old English institutions and old English speech had a good chance of soon recovering from the pressure of the Norman Conquest. But this promise was delayed for 200 years by the disastrous reign of Stephen, and by the overwhelming continental influence that came in with the Angevin system of Henry II., and was maintained by the foreign favourites of Henry III. So far did this French fashion reach, that English beggars learnt scraps of French with which to salute and gratify their wealthier neighbours; and, about 1200, Sampson, abbot of Bury St. Edmunds, being a shrewd conservative, preferred for one of the abbey farms a man who could not speak French. Just as an experienced lady of our day might prefer a housemaid who could not read, if such a one could be found, believing that needless culture and honest work cannot go together.

But though, in the great matters of the return to English institutions and the supremacy of English speech, Henry's quiet reign gave a promise that was not fulfilled, it did good service in awakening in all classes a confidence in the Crown as the chief support of justice and quietness in the land.

It also did us a smaller service, by introducing generally the use of hereditary surnames. These had prevailed for some time in Normandy, but were scarcely known in England before the Conquest. Many of the Norman surnames have clung for 800 years to the villages which received them, as a second distinguishing name, from the followers of the Conqueror; as, for instance, *Bere-Ferrers* and *Sampford-Courtenay* in Devon, *Wootton-Glanville* in Dorset, and *Curry-Mallet* in Somerset.

In the reign of Henry I. surnames were still a mark of rank. Robert of Gloucester tells us that Robert, the king's son, being about to be married to a lady of title, it was objected that he had no surname. "If that be all, I will give him a name," said the king; "he shall be Robert Fitz-le-Roy." This quite satisfied the lady and her parents, and was probably the first occasion for the use of a surname which has become unpleasantly frequent at certain periods of our history.

By the close of Henry's reign surnames had become general for people of any position. This is proved by changes that took place in connection with our own abbey.

At the Domesday Survey, as we have seen already, the tenants of the abbey lands were known merely by their Christian names—Ermenhald, Godfrey, Ralf, William, Nigel, Rainald, and Grento. In 1135, the year in which Henry I. died, and when Robert de Plympton was still abbot, all the military tenants mentioned in our last chapter have surnames. They are Ricardus de Alneto (Dawney), Rogerus Cornutus, Radulfus de Oskervill, Willelmus de tribus Minetis

(Tremenets), Reginaldus de Liddeton, Galfridus de Lege, Willelmus Gurdet, Hugo de Wicha, Robertus Dacus, Willelmus de Crievebere, Ricardus de Coleville, and Galfridus de Lega, and William his son.

Here we have men taking their surnames from their place of residence, as from Wicha and Lega, which are Week and Leigh in Milton Abbot, from Liddaton in Brent Tor, and from Crebor in Tavistock. From the same source have come all surnames belonging to the geographical group, such as John Milton, Thomas Witheridge, Ann Whitchurch.

The other chief groups of surnames are those in which the father's name is embodied, as in Johnson, Wilson, Fitzherbert, Macdonald; those formed from employments, as in Bowman, Farmer, Taylor, Hellier (tiler), and the great clan of Smith; and those due to the prowess of an ancestor, as in Breakspear, Shakespeare, Armstrong; or to some peculiarity of personal appearance, as in Black, White, Gray, and perhaps in the Roger Cornutus of our list.

Besides these four chief classes of surnames, there are a great many due to accidental causes. But their number is less than is often supposed; for in England, on an average, every surname includes more than 500 persons, and in Scotland many more.

Surnames are most important as a means of distinction; so much so, that when many people of the same surname come together, as often happens in small islands, and in gangs of navvies employed on our railways, nicknames are invented to avoid confusion. Thus amongst the navvies\* one is "Curly"

\* I learnt this from acquaintance with the navvies who were making the L. and S.W. line from Lydford to Devonport, from 1887 to 1890.

from the growth of his hair, and another "Devon" from the place of his birth.

In the Isles of Scilly, at one time, nearly everybody in Agnes was a Hicks, and nearly everybody in St. Martin's a Nance; whilst Jenkinse abounded in Tresco and St. Mary's. As therefore the surnames had ceased to be distinctive, and the same Christian and surnames were often borne by several persons, nicknames, and often very amusing ones, were in general use; *e.g.*, one Jenkins was Sammy *Half-loaf*, because his bride, being twitted with the small size of the worthy little boatman, answered, "Half a loaf is better than no bread." In these cases the first meaning of a *nickname*, *i.e.*, an *ekename*, or surname, is still preserved. But these names are personal, as surnames were in the eleventh century, not hereditary, as they were coming to be in the twelfth.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *ROBERT POSTEL AND THE RELIGIOUS REVIVAL.*

ROBERT POSTEL (1141-1154) was abbot through most of Stephen's reign. It was a time of grievous disorder and trouble, and yet the seed time of a great harvest in culture and religion.

As a man, Stephen was brave and generous; as a king he failed utterly, because he had not strength enough to keep order and do justice. The long civil war between the king and the empress Maud, must have brought with it great distress; but the utter chaos and the awful sufferings of this reign were due, not to the civil war, but to Stephen's want of control

over his own lawless partisans. This filled the land with innumerable tyrants, who knew no law but their own lust.

The contemporary records tell the same story, whether we read it in the stately Latin of William of Malmesbury or in the vigorous transition English, in which the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle draws to its close. "They filled the land full of castles. They cruelly oppressed the wretched men of the land with castle-work; and when the castles were made they filled them with devils and evil men. Then they took those who might have any goods and threw them into dungeons for their gold and silver, and tortured them with pains unspeakable, for never were any martyrs tormented as they were. . . . . Many thousands they wore out with hunger. I cannot and may not tell of all the wounds and all the tortures they inflicted on the wretched men of this land; and this state of things lasted the nineteen years that Stephen was king, and ever grew worse and worse. . . . Then was corn dear, and flesh, and cheese, and butter, for there was none in the land. . . . Never yet was there more wretchedness in the land, nor ever did heathen men worse than they did; for, after a time, they spared neither church nor churchyard, but took all the goods that were therein, and then burned the church and all together. . . . . The bishops and learned men cursed them continually, but that was nothing to them, for they were all accursed and forsworn and reprobate. The earth bare no corn; you might as well have tilled the sea, for the land was all ruined by such deeds, and it was said openly that Christ and His saints slept. These



things, and more than we can say, did we suffer during nineteen years, because of our sins."

Clearly it was better for England in those days to have a stern king who kept order, than a mild king who let his robber vassals do what they would.

And yet, more religious houses were founded in England during those nineteen years of agony than in any previous reign. This was due to one of those great waves of religious feeling, which in God's providence have swept over the land from time to time, rousing the world from its carelessness and the church from her drowsiness. This revival was as deep and widespread as any that followed. "Everywhere\* in town and country men banded themselves together for prayer. Hermits flocked to the woods. A new spirit of devotion broke the slumber of the religious houses, and penetrated alike the home of the merchant and the noble."

The intellectual revival was scarcely less marked than the spiritual. Modern history began with William of Malmesbury, and modern fiction with Geoffrey of Monmouth, whilst Vacarius was lecturing at Oxford on Roman law. In schools, monastic and episcopal, were trained the scholars and historians who were to shed glory on the reign of Henry II. Promising students, like Thomas Becket, were sent for general culture to Paris, and to learn church law at Bologna.

Both revivals emanated from the cloister. When human energy is checked from all natural outlet, it will spend itself in stern asceticism or in mental subtleties. It took the former course in St. Bernard,

\* GREEN'S *History of the English People*, p. 91.



the real founder of the Cistercian order, and the religious dictator of the age. It took the latter course in Abelard, the too-early apostle of free inquiry; who, Bernard thought, should be silenced, not with arguments, but with blows. Here in England, the two revivals met in Archbishop Theobald; his school\* at Canterbury was the intellectual centre of the land, whilst he owed his great personal influence to his austere piety and sweetness of character.

Abelard, falling ill on his way to Rome, where he had been condemned unheard, found a refuge with Peter the Venerable, the kindly abbot of Clugny. A hundred years earlier, Clugny had been what Citeaux was then, the leader in a return to the strict rule of St. Benedict. But Clugny had grown remiss; and, some years before Abelard found refuge there, its remissness had been fiercely assailed by Bernard † and calmly defended by Peter. "Read your own rules," cries Bernard. "They lay upon you poverty, scanty food, and poor clothing. They bid you all pray at the fixed times, whether you can attend church or not. They say the feet of all guests shall be washed by the abbot and monks, that every religious house shall obey the bishop, &c. &c. All these rules you break, neither do you observe the fasts. You neglect manual labour, and instead you do the work of clerks and lawyers. You get hold of parish churches with their tithes and first-fruits; and you even take tolls and taxes from villages and towns."

Peter answers all these charges in detail. He

\* STUBBS'S *Lectures on the Study of Modern History at Oxford*, p. 142.

† MAITLAND'S *Dark Ages*, pp. 373 to 380.

shows how observance of the letter of their rule would rob them of its spirit, which, he says, is summed up in this word of St. Benedict, "Let the abbot so temper and dispose all things that souls may be saved."

We may well believe that Peter's defence was heartily welcomed by Robert Postel and other abbots of the old order; who found it hard to keep on in the old quiet ways, under the pressure of this new and overbearing asceticism. Somewhat as parish priests, however zealous after the old-fashioned way of their fathers, are often rather distracted by the pressure of modern revivalism.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *WALTER OF WINCHESTER AND HENRY II.\**

WALTER, who had been, like Aldred and Lyfing, a monk of Winchester, was abbot from the accession of Henry II., 1154, to October, 1174. This was one of the transition periods of our early history.

In architecture, we were passing from the solid, rounded Norman, to the lighter, more aspiring pointed Gothic, the Early English, of which we have a perfect example in Salisbury Cathedral, whilst the actual transition may be seen in the west front of the priory church at Dunstable.

Our language was passing from the last efforts of Old English, in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, to the Middle English, the English of the dialects, which

\* See GREEN'S *History of the English People*; and Mrs. GREEN'S *Henry II.* in Macmillan's *Twelve English Statesmen.*

lasted till the conflict of the dialects was decided in favour of the East Midland, about the year 1360.

In politics, we were passing from Norman absolutism to the constitutional government represented by Magna Charta and the parliament of de Montfort. Socially, we were passing—through the breakdown of the feudal system, which was general throughout Europe, but was accelerated here in England by Henry's vast power and wonderful energy—from the ascendancy of the barons to the rise of the great middle class, which has been the mainstay of liberty and law. Henry fostered this change. He sent his justices through the land, in restraint of the rights of the local courts. He created a new legal aristocracy, with the great justiciar Ralf Glanvill at its head. He took scutage—that is, money payment—from the military tenants, instead of personal service; and by insisting that all freemen should be provided with arms, he restored the old English militia, and made himself independent of the feudal levies. At the same time, he reformed the coinage, opened the way for our wool trade with the continent, and, by granting charters of self-government, encouraged the rising spirit of the towns.

Henry's hopeless efforts at welding together his disjointed continental empire only left us a legacy of 700 years' hostility towards our nearest neighbours; though even this was far better than the risk of becoming the Ireland of France, a very serious risk had his efforts succeeded.

In his dealings with England, though he was but twenty-one on his accession, and though he could not speak English and spent most of his time abroad,

Henry always managed to combine with his own self-interest the true interest of the country at large. In sending his judges through the land, the king was completing the work of Henry I. In seeking to bring Scotland and Wales, and even Ireland, under the lordship of England, he was anticipating the policy of Edward I.

Himself a good scholar, Henry, like his grandfather, was the patron of literature, which showed fresh signs of life in poetry and especially in history, both in Latin and French. Through Henry's great influence, English scholars were widely dispersed on the continent; and the only English pope, Adrian IV., gave him his very questionable claim to the lordship over Ireland. Henry liked to have men of wit and learning about him; but they often complained that their rough-and-ready young king was wearing them to death with his ceaseless activity.

At first, Henry was warmly supported by the church, the natural guardian of law and order. And he always delighted in the company of such holy men as St. Hugh of Lincoln\* and Baldwin of Exeter.

His efforts to make clerks subject to the civil courts were merely a part of his scheme of a common law for all Englishmen. The church, at the height of

\* He was a Burgundian of noble descent, and was invited to England to preside over Henry's Carthusian monastery at Witham, being, with all his humour and kindness, an attached member of that order. With their strict rules of silence and loneliness, the Carthusians were never popular in England, as tending too much to increase our naturally melancholic temperament. See JESSOP's *Coming of the Friars*, &c., p. 124; and for a charming sketch of St. Hugh, Mrs. RUNDLE CHARLES' *Martyrs and Saints*, p. 448, S.P.C.K.

her pretensions, was not likely to yield without a struggle; and the church courts were deservedly popular for their simpler procedure and more merciful judgments. Henry's troubles began when Becket—who, as chancellor, had been his best friend and helper—became, as archbishop, the champion of church privilege.

Human improvement moves slowly. In granting them charters, Henry began for the towns that self-government which Mr. Ritchie's bill is only now securing for the counties.\* When he spent six months in Ireland, Henry's wise statecraft gave that unhappy country a better hope of well-being than it has ever had since. In his premature and inconclusive struggle with clerical privilege, he was engaged in a quarrel that has not ended yet; for, even now, Henry is represented by the Privy Council and Becket by the ritualists.

Henry's greatness, his love of justice, and his ubiquitous energy are reflected in the documents of our abbey. In the return of his knights' fees made to the exchequer, Abbot Walter complains of losses during the previous anarchy (*in tempore guerræ*).† Henry is his "venerable lord, the most noble king of the English," and he, by God's grace, "the humble minister of Tavistock Church." From his needy house (*paupercula domus*) he addresses the king's highness (*celsitudo*) and says that his excellency (*excellencia*) has some time heard his grandfather's charters to which he is referring.

All this shows the contrast between Henry's reign

\* This was written in August, 1888.

† DUGDALE, p. 489, note p.

and Stephen's, the reverence in which the young king was held, and his anxiety to do justice. It also suggests at least, that one of his innumerable journeys brought him to Tavistock or its neighbourhood. Two charters present the king in a very friendly light towards our abbey.\* "Henry, king of England, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and Count of Anjou," makes it known "to his judges and sheriffs and ministers and faithful people of England," that he grants to Abbot Walter all rabbit warrens and forest privileges in wood and plain, as Henry I. had granted to former abbots, and forbids any one to hunt in them or catch a hare in them, without the abbot's licence, under a fine of ten pounds. In the second charter, Henry forbids any suit to be brought against the abbot or monks of Tavistock except before himself or his nominee.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *ABBOT WALTER AND THE PRIOR OF PLYMPTON.*

QUARRELS are dangerous things. Saints like Anselm can hardly come out of them uninjured; and others, who are not saints, are almost certain to be the worse for them. Becket and Henry were both men of great ability and of a certain honesty of purpose. But the archbishop was as far as the king from the unselfishness of the saint, and the quarrel made him obstinate and unreasonable.

Under the same influence, Henry's strangely-mixed character fell off sadly. Nothing could destroy the

\* *Inspeximus*, DUGDALE, num. iii.

instinct for government and the reverence for law which came to him with his Norman blood, and made him a good king of England even to the last. But the bitterness of this quarrel, and yet more of the later one with his wife and children, encouraged the darker side of his sensitive, passionate nature, the craft and cruelty, at once cynical and reckless, which he inherited from his Angevin ancestor, Fulk the Black.

It would seem that, at the time of the great conflict between Becket and the king, our abbot Walter had on hand a small local quarrel with Richard, prior of Plympton, concerning their respective rights in the chapel at Plymstock.

From very early times there had been a chapelry at Plympton, with a dean and prebendaries. But as the prebendaries clung to old-fashioned notions about the marriage of the clergy, the Norman bishop of Exeter, William Warelwast, drove them out and turned the chapelry into a priory of Augustin or black canons.

The black canons, with the Cluniacs, came over here in the wake of the Conqueror. They occupied a middle place between monks and secular canons. The first settlement was at Colchester in 1105, and Bishop William planted them at Plympton in 1121. Their priory grew apace, and soon became the richest house in Devon; though Tavistock\* still held the first place in dignity, in learning, and in the magnificence of its buildings.

At the dissolution the priory held, in Devonshire, the churches of Plympton, Sutton Prior, *i.e.* Plymouth,

\* See OLIVER'S *Monasticon*, p. 89.



Tamerton, Egg Buckland, Maristowe with Thrushelton, Dean-Prior, Newton-St. Cyres, and Blackawton; in Cornwall, Maker and St. Antony-in-Roseland; also the chapels of Plymstock, Wembury, Brixton, Sampford-Spiney, and Shaugh. It likewise received annual pensions from Ugborough, Bridestowe, Bratton-Clovelly, Stoke-in-Teignhead, Exminster, Meavy, Mawgan, and St. Just.

The old abbey and the new priory being thus neighbours and rivals, the chapel at Plymstock became a bone of contention; for Tavistock owned the manor in which the chapel stood, whilst Plympton claimed authority over the chaplain.

The following account from Dugdale\* will show how the matter was settled. "Let all the faithful sons of holy mother church know that this agreement and brotherly covenant has been made by Walter, abbot of Tavistock, and the convent there, and Richard, prior of Plympton, and the convent there, between the churches of Tavistock and Plympton, that all strife, contention, and dispute may be taken away for ever concerning the chapel of Plymstock. The said chapel shall belong for ever, with freedom and quietness, to the church of Plympton; which church must perform the full service for the abbot and monks of Tavistock on their death, as for its own prior and canons on their death. The abbot is to have the value of one year's full provision in the refectory at Plympton for the whole first year after his death, and the monks from the first day of their death being announced; and in the same way the prior and canons are to have

\* Num. xiv. p. 500.



full provision in the refectory of Tavistock. Any monks of Tavistock on visit at Plympton must be received honourably, like brethren of the family, in the choir, the refectory, and the dormitory, with all diligence and proper attendance; and the canons of Plympton in the same way at Tavistock. If the lord abbot and the convent of Tavistock have need to summon the prior or any of the brethren of Plympton to their chapter, they must obey the summons. Moreover, if in any case, for the defence of the rights of the church of Tavistock, or for any other great matter, the lord abbot with his convent has desired the presence of the prior or of any brother canon, the prior of Plympton or that canon shall go with the lord abbot or with the prior of Tavistock through all the diocese of Exeter, with horses and provisions belonging to the prior of Plympton. But if the prior or his canon have to attend in the case of business prosecuted by the house of Tavistock beyond the diocese of Exeter, the horses shall still be supplied by the prior, but the provisions by the abbot. When a chaplain has to be appointed to the chapel at Plymstock,\* the lord prior of Plympton, out of reverence for the lord abbot and his convent, in whose estate the chapel is situated, shall take him to Tavistock, and they shall both promise before the abbot and convent to serve God and them honourably, and to be helpful to their people. If the chaplain should do anything worthy of correction, the prior of Plympton must correct it. But if the chaplain will not give heed to the prior, let him be corrected, or removed,

\* The spelling is so capricious that it is best to give the *modern spelling*, e.g. Plymstock and Plympton.

by the abbot and prior consulting together. When any of the monks shall come to Plymstock, the chaplain of the prior shall give them free admission into the chapel, and a candle at supper and breakfast, and for service in the chapel."

It may seem strange that these good men should have provision in the refectory after their deaths, but such provision, or its value in money, was regarded as property that could be disposed of by will. Just as at present, the canon residentiary at Exeter owns a year's pay after his death, and may leave it by will. It says much for the good temper and prudence of both abbot and prior that their dispute was settled in so friendly a way, and with such care to avoid any future misunderstandings.

This amicable arrangement would seem, however, to have fallen into disuse, for in 1304, in the time of the excellent abbot Robert Campbell, we have the following recognition\* of the rights of the abbey. In a certain inclosure (*clausum*) adjoining the court (*curia*) of the rector of Bikeleghe, in the presence of his notary and others, John, prior of Plympton, acknowledges that he and his successors are bound to wait upon the abbots, on the terms given above, to offer them counsel and help as far as possible; and also to supply the abbots with six white loaves, two flagons of wine, and five wax candles, when they visit their manor of Plymstock. "Moreover," the prior continues, "when it shall happen to the abbot of Tavistock according to the lot of man (*humanitas*), and one of the monks shall be chosen in his place, I hold myself bound to supply the said monk with a decent palfrey and an

\* DUGDALE, num. xv. p. 500.

attendant (*garcione*), for his use at all the courts and places where the election may have to be confirmed." The prior also confesses himself bound to present to the abbot, annually, at Michaelmas, a fit chaplain for the church of Plymstock. These rights, which are immemorial, having been overlooked, Prior John has given to the abbot, as a pledge of their future observance, twenty barrels of wine, of which the abbot has returned five. Besides others, there were present Peter, abbot of Buckfast, Geoffrey, abbot of Buckland, Sir Reginald de Ferrers and Sir Andrew de Treloske, knights, and the notary Robert de Polharman, who derived his authority from the Holy Roman Empire. (*Notarius sacrosancti Romani imperii auctoritate authenticus*).

In 1352 there was\* a dispute between the prior and the archdeacon of Totnes as to the right of visitation. On December 24th in that year, Bishop Grandisson gave his award to this effect: The archdeacon and his successors are to visit the chapel of St. Mary, in the cemetery of Plympton, once only in each year, and to report all neglected matters to the bishop; and, in the same way, with the other churches and chapels dependent upon the conventual church of Plympton.

\* "Exeter City Muniments," 233, in *Notes and Gleanings*, February, 1891.

## CHAPTER X.

*ABBOT BALDWIN AND SOME ABBEY LANDS.*

BALDWIN succeeded Walter of Winchester, and was abbot of Tavistock from 1174 to 1183.

The first year of his abbacy was one full of anxiety for Christendom in general, and for England in particular. For Christendom in general, for Saladin had just extended his conquests from the Nile to the Tigris, and was beginning those assaults on Palestine which ended in the capture of Jerusalem and the third crusade. For England in particular, for in this year Henry II. met and overcame, with a strange mixture of policy, courage, and good fortune, the strongest coalition of forces ever combined against him.

Taking advantage of the popular feeling aroused by Becket's murder, and of the king's long absence in Ireland, the French and Scotch, aided by disaffected subjects in England and France, and even by the young princes and their mother, Queen Eleanor, united to crush the great king in his hour of adversity. But Henry did penance at the tomb of Becket on July 12th. On the very same day the king of Scotland, William the Lion, was surprised and taken prisoner at Alnwick. Within a month Henry was able to return to Normandy and raise the siege of Rouen. Before the end of the year he was reconciled to his sons, and had come out of all his troubles stronger than ever, with his reputation increased for wisdom, energy, and good fortune.

This same year, 1174, witnessed also the beginning of Ireland's misery under England's misrule. Having entered upon nominal possession of that unhappy land, we began at once the mistaken policy, which we have not yet corrected, of making its interests subservient to our own convenience. Whilst Henry stayed amongst them, the Irish gladly submitted to one so strong and yet so wise. He had scarcely left, before the Norman adventurers broke out into utter lawlessness; and in 1174 their cruel oppression drove the natives to their first desperate effort to throw off the foreign yoke.

Turning to our local history, we must probably assign to Baldwin's tenure of office the restoration\* by Robert Oldbridge (*de Veteri Ponte*) of his land at Wynemereston (Wymstone) to the abbot and convent of Tavistock. He gives it back by the advice of his friends and with the consent of his brothers and heirs, since his father and mother only held it by the permission of the abbot and convent. In return for this, the abbot and convent gave him ten marks of silver, and to his brothers and neighbours the benefit of the prayers of the church; and they promised to receive him as a monk whenever he might wish it. Meanwhile, on any day that he may be in Tavistock they are ready to give him the provision (*prebendam*) of a monk. The witnesses are Alan de Furnell and William Buzo, justices of our lord the king; and also Henry de Pomerie, and Drogo the bishop's steward (*dapifer*).

The land of Paseford was certainly restored to

\* DUGDALE, num. x.

the convent whilst Baldwin was abbot.\* The deed begins thus: "Let all the faithful of our Lord Jesus Christ know that I, Robert, the son of Baldwin, the son of Gervase, constrained by the evident power of heavenly discipline, have given back to God and to the monastery of the Mother of God the most blessed Virgin Mary and of the glorious Confessor of God the blessed Rumon, and to B., the abbot of Tavistock and to the convent, their land of Paseford, which I obtained from the foresaid B., abbot of Tavistock, through the influence of my uncles, Roger the son of Reinfred and Master G. de Constantino, keeper of the seal (*sigillarius*) to my lord the king." This land, with all the wood, fields, and pasture belonging to it, he gives back to the abbey, absolutely and for ever, for the salvation of himself and his family, especially of his father and mother, his brother John, and his sisters Agnes and Hawys. The witnesses are William Giffard (of Lamerton †), H. Dalnetus, G. Cofyn, Gilbert de Ferrers, Roger de Wycha, Fulco Duenzport, Robert de Crewabera (Creber), Roger Ruby, Radulph, a chaplain, Richard Grindeham, and many others.

\* DUGDALE, num. xi.

† See the Bull of Exemption, DUGDALE, num. ix.

CHAPTER XI.

*ABBOT BALDWIN, AND BALDWIN THE  
ARCHBISHOP.*

OUR only remaining document connected with Baldwin brings him into contact with the literary and religious revival of his time, rather than with its fighting and turmoil. This is the confirmation by Bartholomew, bishop of Exeter, of the gift of Richard de Wicha (Week-Dabernon in Milton Abbot), mentioned in our notice of Abbot Osbert. It runs thus: "To all the faithful to whom this present writing shall come, Bartholomew, by divine mercy called to be bishop of Exeter, greeting in the Lord. Let all know that I have seen and read the deed of Richard de Wicha, in which he declares that he has granted and given, in free and perpetual alms, to the abbot and convent of Tavistock and to the brothers of the monastery of the blessed confessor, Nicholas of Scilly, for the safety of his own soul and his parents, and also that of the late Reginald, earl of Cornwall, his lord, all his tithes of Scilly, and particularly of the rabbits, which he had for some time unjustly kept back, as not supposing that tithes had to be given of such things as these; and that, with his own hand, he presented this deed of gift upon the altar of the blessed Rumon of Tavistock, before the book of the evangelists, in the presence of Baldwin, the abbot of the convent of that place, and many others. Since, however, both the monastery of Tavistock and all the land of the



aforesaid Richard of Scilly (de Sully) belongs to my diocese, as diocesan bishop I confirm the aforesaid gift of this Richard, by my episcopal authority here written, and by setting my seal to it, as to that which I hold to be approved and established."

The witnesses are, B. (*i.e.* Baldwin), archdeacon of Cornwall; M. (*i.e.* Martin), prior of Plympton; Robert de Anc.; Peter the son of Richard; John Tavistock; Peter Pic. (perhaps one of Stephen's mercenaries settled in Devon); William Lumb. (possibly Lumburn); John Walencis (perhaps a native of Cornwall or West Wales); Ralph de Eisse; Walter de Camera (the chamberlain); Ralph, and many others. We see how surnames were still being gradually formed from employment, abode, or the father's name.

This Prior Martin was rebuilding his priory in the prevalent Early English style, and doing his work so well that it lasted till the dissolution under Henry VIII.

There can hardly be a doubt that Archdeacon B. was the Baldwin who, ten years later, became archbishop of Canterbury. He was the son of poor parents at Exeter, and either brother or uncle of Joseph, the Latin poet whose works are almost classical. Baldwin was noticed and encouraged by Bishop Bartholomew, who was also born of poor parents in Exeter, and was a man of great learning, and a noted preacher. Having acted some time as schoolmaster, Baldwin was presently appointed by the bishop to be his archdeacon. At that time the training and the work of an archdeacon were of such a worldly nature, that it was a common question, Is it possible for an archdeacon to be saved?



Baldwin was of a devout and impulsive disposition; he would not run the risk. Leaving his office, he became a monk in the house of the Cistercians, which had been built at a ford of the Axe, and which, as Ford Abbey, soon took a leading place amongst the religious houses of Devon.

But Baldwin's talents could not be hid. In a year or two he was abbot. In 1181 he was chosen bishop of Worcester, and, like our Aldred in the same office, did his king good service with the prince and people of South Wales. In 1184, after a quarrel between the suffragan bishops and the monks of Christ Church, Baldwin was made archbishop of Canterbury. He hoped to transfer the right of election to the bishops, conjointly with secular canons, for whom he began to build a college at Hackington,\* half a mile from Canterbury. But the monks, backed by the pope, were too much for him; and, by agreement with the bishop of Rochester, he removed his new foundation to Lambeth.

Their meeting over the gift of Richard de Wicha is our excuse for passing from our own abbot to his greater namesake, the very devout monk but "lukewarm bishop," as Pope Urban called him, who ended his changeful life before Acre in 1190, broken down with many labours, but yet more with the sin and turbulence of his fellow-crusaders.

He had done valiantly; for, under the year 1190, Geoffrey de Vinsauf in his Chronicle tells us that: "Among and above the others, the venerable Archbishop Baldwin distinguished himself, though his advanced age might have inclined him to in-

\* Hook's *Archbishops*, vol. ii., pp. 549-556.

activity. Raising the standard inscribed with the name of the glorious martyr Thomas, he found for it a meet and worthy company; for two hundred knights and three hundred followers served in the pay of the holy man."

But, later in the same year, we read, "When the archbishop of Canterbury saw, what he had before heard, that the army had become altogether dissolute, and given to drinking, dice, and other abominations, it afflicted his spirit, even to weariness of life. And, because a disease which is general is difficult to cure, when one day the worst reports of this kind reached his ears, he sighed and prayed, 'O Lord God, there is such need of chastening and correcting, that if it please Thy mercy that I should be removed from the turmoil of this present life, I have remained long enough in this army.' Scarcely fifteen days after these words, as if heard by the Lord, he began to feel cold and stiff, and, overcome by a fever, a few days after he slept in the Lord."

In spite of religious zeal, the armies of the crusaders would seem to have been no better behaved than other armies.

## CHAPTER XII.

*ABBOT HERBERT, THE APPROPRIATOR, AND  
THE CRUSADES.*

HERBERT was abbot from 1183 to 1200, so that he lived through the painful domestic quarrels of the royal family, and the stirring events of the third Crusade.

Like the Conqueror, Henry II. had the closing years of a great career embittered and spoilt by the misconduct of his sons.

The chroniclers side strongly with the "glorious father," as Hoveden calls Henry. Geoffrey of Brittany is "that son of perdition." Henry, the young king, deserves early death for having "wished to introduce parricide into the world." John, sent to govern Ireland in 1185, only comes back disgraced, having offended the native chiefs by his insolence, and his own soldiers by his covetousness, for he "shut up everything in his own purse." Richard is let off lightly, and that no doubt partly for his sincere repentance, partly for his military prowess, which spread the fame of English valour through the world, but chiefly for his zeal as a soldier of the cross, which, in those days of crusading enthusiasm, was allowed, by popular sentiment as well as by the plenary absolution of Pope Clement III., to cover a multitude of sins.

In the midst of his family troubles, Henry had proof that his renown, as the greatest monarch of the West, had reached as far as Palestine. In 1185 there came a deputation from Jerusalem, with the patriarch Heraclius at its head, begging him to accept the crown

of the Holy City, and save it from the threatened attack of Saladin. Henry promised his aid, but declined the crown. Richard was naturally indignant; for, though he had some of his father's statesmanship, he was much more of a warrior, and military adventure was the ambition, even the passion, of his life.

The year 1186 was the lull before the storm; and, whilst the western princes were quarrelling, Saladin was advancing. In 1187 the storm burst, in Saladin's great victory at Tiberias, when the wood of the cross was taken. Presently Jerusalem fell, and thus, after a short possession of eighty-seven years, the Holy City was once more in the hands of the infidel; and the prodigious labours and pains of the earlier crusaders had come to nothing. The heart of Christendom was moved at last. Richard took the cross at once, and the emperor Frederic Barbarossa soon after. The kings of France and England did the same, early in 1188, at Gisors; and were "followed by the nobles of both kingdoms, with numbers of the clergy and laity."\* The French wore a red cross, the English white, and the Flemish green, for the sake of distinction. Men who kept aloof had a distaff sent them, as a hint that they were failing in manhood.

The Crusades did Europe a real service by drawing the military ardour of princes and people from paltry schemes of personal advantage to the enthusiasm of a great and common purpose. But selfishness is slowly conquered. Before the close of 1188 the great elm near Gisors, underneath which the kings used to meet, was cut down by Philip, to show that further conference was useless. Richard joined his

\* GEOFFREY DE VINSAUF, bk. ii., chap. 17.

military strength to Philip's craft. The treacherous John sided with his father's enemies. Henry's health was failing. His good fortune deserted him. Le Mans was burnt in January, 1189, just seven hundred years ago.\* Castle after castle fell. Tours was taken by storm in July. Then, in despair Henry yielded everything and retired to Chinon to die, utterly broken-hearted, cursing the day of his birth and the rebellious children whom he had loved so well. He was buried at Fontevrault. Count Richard "wept bitterly" as he followed the body, and, ten years later, was laid at his father's feet as a mark of his lasting repentance.

As to church matters, ever since the Conquest the monks had been slowly appropriating the parish churches. Whereas at the Domesday Survey (1085) our own abbey was merely possessed of certain manors in Devon and Cornwall, in 1184 we have a deed of Bishop Bartholomew, of Exeter, securing to Abbot Herbert and his monks no less than seven parish churches. The deed as given in Dugdale† runs thus:

"To all the sons of holy mother church likely to read this document, B., by God's grace bishop of Exeter, greeting in the Lord. Know ye that, having considered the poverty of the monastery of Tavystoke, and having weighed the wholesome petition of our beloved sons, Herbert by divine permission abbot, and the society of the said monastery, with the lawful consent of our chapter, to the aforesaid monastery and the monks there serving God in view of the divine

\* This was written in January, 1889.

† Num. viii.

love, we do give, appropriate, and, for the perpetual memory of the matter, by this writing confirm, the church of St. Eustachius of Tavystoke, the church of St. Peter of Lamertone, the church of Sts. Constantine and Ægidius of Middeltone, the church of St. Paternus of Northpiderwyne, the church of St. John the Baptist of Hatherleghe, the church of St. Helena of Abbedesham (Abbotsham), the church of St. Michael of the Rock (de Rupe; *i.e.*, Brentor), with all things belonging to them, &c., &c."

In testimony whereof, &c., the seals of the bishop and chapter are affixed to the deed.

This appropriation of livings increased rapidly,\* in spite of Mortmain Acts, until at the Reformation two-thirds of the benefices of the country were in the hands of the monasteries. The grasping spirit of the monks caused the impoverishment of the parishes in every way; for the clerical duties were entrusted to deputies (vicars), too poor themselves to help their poor neighbours, and were often neglected altogether.

Already in Herbert's time the complaint is heard, which ever waxes louder and louder for the next two centuries, "The holy chant and bare church walls are intrusted to poor vicars, induced for a trifling pay thus to insult God." † The only care is, that "a frequent vociferation be heard in the house of the Lord. If the stranger knock at the door of such an one, or the poor should cry to him, being himself but a needy vicar, he must answer, 'Pass on and seek alms elsewhere, for the master of the house is not at home.'"

\* BLUNT'S *Reformation*, chap. iv.

† RICHARD OF DEVIZES, A. D. 1192.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*ABBOT HERBERT AND POPE CELESTINE.*

PERHAPS Herbert, like his contemporary abbot, Samson of St. Edmundsbury, found his abbey impoverished by mismanagement and dealings with those "blood-suckers" the Jews, who in the early years of Richard paid such a terrible penalty for their greed and usury. At any rate, Herbert not only pleaded poverty to the bishop of Exeter in 1184, but he also begged for and secured the protection of a papal\* bull in 1193.

Celestine succeeded Clement in 1191. He was a good man, bent upon doing his duty, intermeddling with the greatest matters of state and not despising the smallest affairs of the church, writing his Latin epistles with equal care to king or emperor and to our humble abbot here in Tavistock. But with all his desire to do right, Celestine does not forget the interests of the Roman See. The rights and properties of our abbey are all duly confirmed, but for this confirmation three golden pieces are to be paid annually into the papal exchequer. The abbey is to be exempted from all interference on the part of the bishop of the diocese or any one else, and it is to be considered as only belonging to and being only under the protection of "the blessed Mary and saint Rumon and the most holy Roman church." No doubt Herbert thought he was securing wealth and

\* See Bull of Exemption and Confirmation in DUGDALE, num. ix.; and in OLIVER, num. ii., from "Veysy's Register."



liberty for his abbey; but this appropriation of parish churches and this exemption\* from the oversight of the bishop did in fact hasten its downfall, by alienating the hearts of the people, and encouraging the self-indulgence of the monks.

The churches confirmed to our abbey by this bull of Pope Celestine, besides those in Bishop Bartholomew's charter, are,—the church of the Holy Trinity at Boryngton; the church of the blessed Mary at Deveneburye (Denbury); the church of St. Peter at Monkehampton; the mother church of St. Paternus at Wulryngton (Werrington), with her chapels and all things thereto pertaining; Anton (Antony) with the churches founded there, and Savyocke (Shevyoke) with the church founded there; and also the church property in the Isles of Scilly spoken of under Abbot Osbert.

The manors or fiefs herein confirmed to the abbey are,—in Devon, Lega (Leigh in Milton Abbot, or, as Oliver thinks, Rumonsleigh); Weredeget (Hurdwick); Tornebury (Thornbury); Wella (Morwell); Plymstok; Raddone; Hundetorre (Houndtor); besides one house in the city of Exeter; and in Cornwall, Rame, Tregonon, Penhangar, and Talcar—all these being mentioned in Domesday: also Auri (Aller), Dagge-cumba, Nordecumba, Odatrew (Ottery), Ordleigh, and Rauburga (Roborough), added since Domesday.

There is an interesting statement about the church of "Lamberton," that it was given by the lord of the estate, William Giffard, to the abbey, for perpetual alms, and so confirmed by Bishop Bartholomew; and that it was assigned by the abbey, with the consent

\* See OLIVER'S *Monasticon*, Preface, p. vi.



of John, late bishop of Exeter, "for the feeding daily of three poor people and other works of piety." What has become of this charitable endowment?

The question as to the rival claims of church and state, as we have seen already, is much older than the Reformation. It began when the state recognised the church in the edict of Constantine, A.D. 313. It has been a chronic difficulty here in England, becoming acute from time to time, as either church or state, in an access of life and energy, seemed to encroach the one on the other. As it was with Dunstan and Edwy, Anselm and Rufus, Becket and Henry II., Bishop Fisher and Henry VIII., the seven bishops and James II., so it is now with the bishop of Lincoln and the court of final appeal.

Our abbeys knew something of the difficulty seven hundred years ago. By the rule of St. Benedict, the monks were to choose their own abbot; but their choice was continually interfered with, as the appointments to bishoprics were, by royal authority. Herbert took the dangerous course of securing freedom of election by papal authority. One of the clauses of this bull of Celestine decrees, that, on the death of the abbot of Tavistock, "no one shall be appointed in his place, whether by craft or violence, but he whom the brethren in general, or the part of them possessed with the best judgment, shall determine, according to the fear of God and the rule of St. Benedict, beyond all question to be chosen abbot."

Difficulties about burials too are at least seven hundred years old. Devout persons preferred burial within the sacred precincts of the abbey; but their

own ministers were unwilling to lose the burial fees. Once more the pope interferes, and Celestine's bull decrees "that burial in the abbey shall be free, so that no one shall oppose the piety and the last will of those who choose to be buried there, unless they are under excommunication or interdict, saving only the canonical rights of those churches from which the bodies of the dead are removed."

Difficulties of this sort, without and within, have followed the church all along her course. They will follow her still; and they are only to be met now, as they have been in the past, by Christian forbearance and reasonable compromise.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### *SOME SOCIAL CONDITIONS ABOUT A.D. 1200.*

WHEN Herbert died in 1200, England was about to pass from being the chief province of a great European kingdom, to be once more an island realm, free to develop its own liberty. This, therefore, is a good time to pause, and look at the condition of our people, as it is presented to us in the records of the time.

Henry's strong rule of law and order, still maintained by Richard's ministers, secured internal quietness and fostered trade; and the people prospered. The taxes for foreign wars, and the heavy burden of the king's ransom, were borne cheerfully on the whole. The only murmurs came from the newly-enfranchised citizens of London, who, proud of their first mayor, boasted that he was their king and they

needed no other. But soon after—as if to give us a caution in these days of local self-government—the citizens, through William Longbeard, “the champion of the poor,” appealed to King Richard against the rich men of the city, because they “spared their own purses and wanted the poor to pay everything.”\*

Regulations for the conduct of the crusaders show us something of the manners of the time. Punishments were cruel, as indeed they continued to be almost to our day.† A thief was to be tarred and feathered and turned adrift at the first landing-place. A man who drew his knife on another was to lose his hand. He who struck with the fist was to be plunged into the sea three times. A murderer on land was to be buried alive with the corpse of his victim ; at sea, to be tied to it and drowned. As to gambling, the kings might play at their good pleasure ; knights and clergy so as to lose no more than twenty shillings in the twenty-four hours ; and, with the consent of their masters, men-at-arms attending on kings, bishops, or barons, might play to the same extent.‡ But no others might play at all for money ; if they did, being men-at-arms, they were to be whipped three days through the army ; being mariners, they were dipped in the sea the first thing in the morning for three days.

Our soldiers seemed to the Syrian merchants to eat and drink like monsters ; but they fought like men. The troops of a London ship did Sancho, King of

\* HOVEDEN'S *Annals*, vol. ii. p. 388, Bohn.

† *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 140.

‡ *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 161.

Portugal, good service against the Moors. When Richard landed to rescue Cyprus from its Greek tyrant, his men came upon the enemy "like ravening wolves," and "like a shower upon the grass did the arrows fall upon those that fought."\*

In spite of the strongly-marked distinction between classes, war and chivalry gave a kind of dignity to every man, and produced that friendly intercourse between master and servant which is well brought out in the character of Faulconbridge in Shakespeare's *King John*, and his connection with the king on one side and with his servant, James Gurney, on the other. Moreover, there was even then one outlet for ambition. Prelates were the prime ministers, and often the generals, of those days; and prelates might be of the lowliest origin. Four of Richard's justiciars (prime ministers) were great churchmen.

The first of these, William Longchamp, bishop of Ely, was sprung from the people. In his struggle with Earl John he was finally dismissed from his offices before a folkmote (parliament of the people) "in the open field without London towards the east."† His bitter enemy, Hugh, bishop of Coventry, was as personal in his attack upon him as political opponents are now.‡ He declared that Longchamp goaded the young nobles of the English Court, just as his father used to goad the oxen in the fields at Beauvais. Then, with the blindness which marks the partisan of every age, he charges him with slighting

\* HOVEDEN'S *Annals*, vol. ii. p. 201-2.

† RICHARD OF DEVIZES, A.D. 1191, section 53, p. 32 (Bohn); also HOVEDEN, vol. ii. p. 230.

‡ HOVEDEN, vol. ii. p. 232.

the English and being ignorant of their language, and yet being so anxious to stand well with them that he hired French minstrels to sing his praises in the streets.

This implies that, in the towns at least, our people understood French. The extent of this knowledge is limited in a humorous picture of our chief towns, in a letter purporting to be from a French Jew of the time.\* The lad to whom he writes is told to avoid every place but Winchester, which is the best of cities, the people having but one fault—that they tell lies like watchmen. London is the sink for all the world's wickedness. Rochester and Chichester are mere villages. Oxford can scarcely maintain its own clerks. Worcester, Chester, and Hereford are too near the desperate Welshmen. York abounds in Scots, a vile, faithless, and rascally lot. At Bristol everybody is or has been a soap-maker. Exeter supports men and beasts with the same grain (oats). In Durham, Norwich, and Lincoln no one knows French.

As to amusements—quarter-staff and wrestling, and the first rough draft of the Robin Hood ballads, amused the people in greenwood-glade, or village-green; whilst the gentler games of bowls and chess, and the more finished French chansons, beguiled their masters' leisure in hall or cloister. In our own abbey the bowling green, tradition says, occupied the southern portion of the precincts, under the battlemented wall by the river. Poetry might well be popular under a poet king; and Richard, the great soldier, was also one of the troubadours, the first

\* RICHARD OF DEVIZES, p. 50.

poets in any Romance language ; so fair a poet that it was said of him by a brother poet : \*

“Neatest couplets could he write,  
Fit for gentle ladies’ sight.”

And, as the romances tell, he owed his deliverance from captivity in some measure to his friendship for the troubadour Blondel.

Earl John’s connection with minstrelsy was not so pleasant. He was playing chess with the noted minstrel Fulk Warren. † Getting the worst of it, he broke the board on Fulk’s head, when Fulk dealt him such a blow as nearly killed him. John was mean enough to remember this horse-play when he was king, and kept Fulk out of his property for many years.

Abbot Herbert’s character and habits are left to our fancy. Had he some share of the wisdom, good humour, and brave and devout spirit of the best churchman of the time, the saintly Hugh of Lincoln, who also died in 1200? Did he delight in visiting the sick, helping the poor, and speaking kindly to the children? Did he find leisure for chess sometimes, or for a game of bowls in the abbey mead?

\* A Provençal poet, Savarie de Mauléon, in the service of Saint Louis of France, quoted in T. WHARTON’S *History of English Poetry*, p. 77, note 3. Murray, 1870.

† LEL. *Coll.* i. p. 264, in PERCY’S *Essay on Ancient Minstrels*. See also KNIGHT’S *Popular History of England*, vol. i. p. 327.

## Book III.

### CHAPTER I.

#### *ABBOT JORDAN AND THE INTERDICT.*

JORDAN was abbot of Tavistock from 1200 to 1220, a most eventful time ; for, during those years, England lost Normandy, passed through an interdict, and won Magna Charta.

King John was one of the most able, and certainly the worst, of the strong Angevin race. With all his vileness, he had strange powers of attraction, which kept some good men faithful to him almost to the last ; but, as one wise friend after another was taken from him, he plunged more and more deeply into the slough of tyranny, folly, and sin.

St. Hugh of Lincoln, the bold reprover of Henry and Richard, was not less sincere in dealing with John. He hoped the king would keep his promises, "for you know," said he, "I hate lying exceedingly." At another time, referring to an amulet which the king, as superstitious as he was profane, wore round his neck, he said, "Trust not in that senseless stone, but in the living stone, the Lord Jesus Christ." At Fontevrault, by way of caution, he pointed out to him a sculpture of the last day, with a number of crowned kings being led away by devils to the pit. No one else could speak to John as Hugh had spoken ; and in 1200, with John himself and the king



of Scots in attendance, Hugh was buried in the choir of his own splendid cathedral. From his appointment to the bishopric fifteen years before, he had been rebuilding it in the new pointed Gothic; and the choir and transepts, which alone he lived to finish, afford us one of the first and best examples of Early English architecture,\* a material proof, as it were, of that recovery of national English feeling from Norman ascendancy, which shows itself in the united efforts of barons and people in the cause of liberty, during the thirteenth century.

The queen-mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, a woman of first-rate ability, was another of John's wise councillors; and the loss of his French dominions followed close upon her death in 1204.

The faithless king had two other faithful advisers in the early part of his reign, Geoffrey Fitz-Peter the justiciar, and his chancellor, Hubert Walter, archbishop of Canterbury. These great men worked together to combine loyal service for the king with justice and good laws for the people. Hubert Walter was the nephew by marriage, and the adopted son and willing pupil, of Henry II.'s justiciar, Ranulf Glanvill, who died before Acre in 1190, and was a collateral ancestor of our own Judge Glanvill. As bishop of Salisbury, Hubert had been chaplain and general in the third Crusade. He was made archbishop in 1193, chief justiciar in 1194; he was viceroy during Richard's absence; and he added to all these the office of papal legate. Giraldus Cambrensis, who had a pretty quarrel with Hubert about the metropolitan claims of St. David's, made fun of his

\* J. H. PARKER'S *Introduction to Gothic Architecture*, p. 87.

bad Latin at the table of Innocent III., that austere and ambitious pontiff being quite facetious on proper occasions. But if he wrote poor Latin, Hubert wielded all his great powers firmly and wisely. It did not please the high churchmen of that day to see an archbishop so much occupied with secular affairs. Yielding to popular feeling he resigned the justiciarship in 1198, and was succeeded by the like-minded Fitz-Peter. But he probably believed, and rightly believed, that to rule a great kingdom wisely was no mere secular matter; so he became John's chancellor in 1199, and restrained that "light-minded"\* king till he died in 1205, when John plunged at once into his disastrous struggle with Rome.

Innocent certainly encroached upon the rights of our English kings, in appointing Stephen Langton to Canterbury without waiting for John's approval; but he could not have made a better choice. Langton was the greatest Englishman of his time. Innocent had learnt to love and revere him for his holiness and learning, when they were fellow-students at Paris. Langton was not merely a saintly scholar, he was also a zealous English patriot and a clear-headed statesman; just the leader, at once enthusiastic and yet full of shrewdness and resource, that England needed to bring to a focus the popular discontent with John's tyranny. Not recognising Langton as their future leader, most of the nobles, and many of the clergy, stood by the king against this papal aggression. The king, at first, rolled on the ground in his rage and gnawed the rushes, after his fashion. But this was merely from childish

\* RICHARD OF DEVIZES, sect. 75.

vexation at being thwarted, for when he did submit, after six years' interdict, he cared nothing for national honour, if he could secure the pope's anathema against the framers of Magna Charta.

Tavistock must have had a gloomy time during the interdict. Probably Abbot Jordan maintained the regular services in the abbey church to keep the monks out of mischief, but no music was allowed. The parish church was closed. There might be preaching in the open air, and communion administered to the dying; but the dead were buried in silence, and marriages could only be solemnized at the church door. We may be sure there was great rejoicing in Tavistock, as elsewhere, when at last in 1213 the king and the pope were reconciled.

## CHAPTER II.

### *ABBOT JORDAN AND HERESY.*

FOR some months in 1216, it seemed as if England might become a province of France; for the people were welcoming Louis, the son of Philip Augustus, as a deliverer from their native tyrant John; who, supported by the pope, was wasting the country with foreign mercenaries; this being his way of keeping the promises of Magna Charta. Providentially, John was cut off in the midst of his folly and tyranny. The nation rallied to the child-king Henry III., at the call of William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke; and England was saved to regain her liberty, by the slow and persevering efforts of a united people. In France, for want of such united effort and the interfusion of

classes which made such effort possible, the power of the monarch grew steadily more and more absolute, until its oppression was thrown off, with fearful violence, at the Revolution, a hundred years ago.

During the dismal reign of John, a terrible and wicked tragedy was being enacted in the south of France, in the beautiful and flourishing country of the troubadours. This tragedy was enacted by the church, through her agent Simon de Montfort, father of the very different Simon, Earl of Leicester, to whom we are indebted for our first House of Commons. Under the great pope, Innocent III., the papacy, and the hierarchical system identified with it, seemed to be at their height of glory and power. But, at this very time, a spirit of independence and free inquiry showed itself simultaneously in all parts of Christendom.

This movement was due, partly to the activity and freedom of thought introduced by the Crusades, partly to the growth of the commercial spirit and the liberties granted to towns and cities; partly to the growing wealth and greed and idleness of the clergy.

The cry of discontent with the spiritual domination of the priesthood was waxing louder and louder during the twelfth century. It was heard from all sides; from England, from many parts of France, from the great cities of Germany, from Hungary, and even from Italy. The dissentients differed widely amongst themselves. Some, like the Waldenses and the "Poor Men of Lyons," were an early sort of Puritan or Methodist, and only wished to return to the simplicity of apostolic teaching and practice. Others, like the Albigenses, combined with these

Puritan principles, tenets more eccentric, and somewhat tinged with eastern mysticism and heresy. They believed in the essential evil of matter, and so taught a strict asceticism. They taught that wonderful powers of spiritual direction and consolation belonged, not to the priests of the church, but to those who by strict discipline and divine communion had attained the privileged rank of the "Perfect." The former views prevailed in many valleys of the Alps; the latter had almost supplanted the orthodox faith in Languedoc and Provence.

The one common\* feature of all these movements was opposition to the claims of the priesthood. They all agreed in regarding these claims as robbing Christians of that free access to God, and filial communion with Him, which they considered the New Testament clearly taught to be the privilege of all believers in Christ.

Proofs of disaffection were not wanting in England. The "Apocalypse of Goliath," a Latin poem assigned to Walter Map, who was archdeacon of Oxford in 1196, declares that the clergy, from the pope to the country vicar, were selfish, greedy hirelings, living *by* the sheep, not *for* them. When Richard I. was at Messina, in 1190, he took great delight in the † conversation of Joachim, abbot of Curazzo, who ventured to teach that a pope would be the final embodiment of Antichrist. Excommunications and interdicts

\* MILMAN'S *Latin Christianity*, book ix. chap. viii.

† HOVEDEN, as above, vol. ii. p. 177. Referring to a controversy concerning the Antichrist between Joachim and certain archbishops and bishops, Hoveden says, "And although they brought forward many arguments on both sides, with strong indications of truthfulness, *the dispute is still undecided*," which is as true now, in 1890, as it was in 1190.

were so common that men learnt to despise them, together with the spiritual usurpation from which they sprang. Even John behaved decently well, and prospered in his plans, when he was under the curse of the pope. His nephew, the Saxon Emperor Otho, and his brother-in-law, Raymond, Count of Toulouse, were excommunicated; so also was his son-in-law, the Emperor Frederic II., who had in him the making of a good Christian and a great ruler, but was driven into heresy and recklessness by the vindictive persecution of the popes.

But, harsh and impolitic as was the conduct of Rome towards individual sovereigns, her treachery and cruelty reached their height in the Albigensian crusade. Even the rough soldiers were staggered at the wholesale slaughter, and asked, "How shall we know the heretics from the orthodox?" "Kill them all," was the answer of a blood-thirsty fanaticism, "and the Lord will know His own." The pagan persecutions of the first three centuries have nothing to compare with this abominable crime, by which, with incredible suffering, fair provinces were devastated, and a rising civilization and literature were nipped in the bud. And the author of this crime was Catholic Christianity represented by Rome. For ages the church had been falling from the free and loving spirit of the gospel to a priestly system and oppressive ceremonialism, half Jewish, half pagan. It was an awful yet natural climax, that, in dealing with her innocently-erring children, whose only fault was that they ventured to think for themselves, she should surpass the utmost barbarity ever shown, even to their avowed enemies, either by pagan or Jew.

## CHAPTER III.

*ABBOT WILLIAM DE KERNIKE AND THE NEW  
PREACHING.*

WILLIAM DE KERNIKE, our next abbot, was probably a man of ability and piety, for he was invited to leave the little community of Otterton, where he was the prior of four monks, to preside over the lordly abbey of Tavistock. Being a man abreast of his time in head and heart, he must have regarded with interest and with sympathy the great outburst of popular preaching which was destined to work such a change in the thought and life of Christendom.

Sermons to Christians, called homilies and conferences, were in very early times confined to bishops, and were quite distinct from evangelizing sermons to the heathen. In the West, Augustine of Hippo is said to have been the first preaching presbyter, and Leo I. the first preaching pope.

Sacred eloquence, which reached its height in Basil, the Gregories, Chrysostom, and Augustine, declined rapidly with the breaking up of the old Roman civilization. It was revived by St. Bernard, but apart from incitements to the Crusades, addressed itself almost entirely to the educated. The common people had to be content with the reading of a homily, or an exposition of the gospel for the day, by the parish priest.

But the Crusades, and other causes already mentioned, had awakened a spirit of thought and enquiry throughout Europe, and multitudes, finding no satis-



faction in the services and teaching of the church, and offended with the luxury or idleness of the clergy, sought teachers for themselves in the "Poor Men of Lyons," and the popular preachers of Languedoc. The three weapons of these new teachers were simplicity of life, translations of the New Testament into the language of the people, and especially popular preaching. They were doing at the close of the twelfth century what Wesley's itinerant preachers were doing at the close of the eighteenth, and by the same means. Being of the people, and in full sympathy with them, they spoke to them in their own tongue, and thus won the way to their hearts. But the church was still wise enough to use other means besides the sword in dealing with her alienated children.

Dominic,\* the astute, the devout, the austere Spaniard, of a noble family in Old Castile, was the first to recognize the want of the church. He set on foot an order of popular preachers, in the interests of Rome and of orthodox (which meant at that time sacerdotal) Christianity. At first rejected, he was soon welcomed and sanctioned by Innocent III. His energy and eloquence were believed to have the support of miracles. In a few years, members of his Order, able, devout men, especially trained for popular instruction, were spread all over Europe.

\* I would refer my readers to Dr. JESSOP's *Coming of the Friars*, which I had not seen when this chapter was written. He says, "St. Francis was the John Wesley of the thirteenth century, whom the church did *not* cast out." He draws a comparison, which, if strongly stated, has too much truth in it. "Rome has never been afraid of fanaticism. . . . The Church of England has never known how to deal with a man of genius."

Twelve years after the birth of Dominic, Francis, the gentlest and most enthusiastic of saints, was born in the beautiful Italian town of Assisi. Very early in life he devoted himself to the strictest asceticism. As he grew up, it was borne in upon him that the church was failing in her mission because her clergy had so utterly forsaken apostolic simplicity of life. With a few followers, he consecrated himself to the service of God, in absolute poverty. Like Dominic, at first rejected, he was presently accepted, and turned to good use, by Innocent III., and the mendicant friars vied with the preaching friars in winning souls for the church. In so doing, the friars also rescued many from sin and selfishness, and so did much to secure that higher tone of morals and religion which distinguishes the thirteenth century.

In wholesome rivalry, the Dominicans soon embraced the poverty of the Franciscans, and the Franciscans strove to equal or surpass the Dominicans in popular eloquence. Besides their influence with the people, ere long they also took the lead in the learning of the schools; and the claims of Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus divided the allegiance of the learned for the next two centuries.

The power of the new orders was widened and secured by their Tertiaries.\* These were called by the Franciscans Brethren of Penitence, by the Dominicans Soldiers of Jesus Christ, an early anticipation of the Salvation and Church Armies. They were men and women who promised to help in every way the work of the new teachers, to use

\* MILMAN'S *Latin Christianity*, book ix. chap. ix.

diligently church services, and strictly observe church rules. They had not to give up their ordinary calling, but were to keep away from dances, and especially from the theatre. How was it that, as Matthew Paris tells us in 1249, the new orders had degenerated more in forty years than the older monastic orders in three or four centuries? Was it that nature was re-asserting itself more rapidly against the strain of an extreme asceticism? or was it that, by attaching themselves to the prevalent hierarchical system, with its centre at Rome, every order in turn, however sincerely self-denying at first, soon caught the taint of self-aggrandizement from the system which it supported?

When the new preaching reached Devonshire, our abbot was probably divided in his feelings between thankfulness that the people should be awakened and reformed by any means, and a natural dread of novelty and passing excitement. Just as we are now divided in our feelings about parochial missions. Perhaps he met the difficulty by preaching more carefully and more frequently himself. Hoveden,\* at least, gives the case of one abbot, Eustace of Flaye, who came from Normandy into England, A.D. 1200, to preach the word of the Lord. He also was supported by miracles; and he so preached in London, and elsewhere, that his hearers gave up their claims for interest, and would no longer hold markets on the Lord's Day. Many citizens and discreet men even began to keep daily upon their tables an alms dish to receive meat for their poor neighbours. For these deeds of mercy, Satan

\* In *Bohn's Antiquarian Library*, p. 487.

stirred up against this man of God the ministers of iniquity, who said, "It is not lawful for thee to reap another man's harvest." So the said abbot, being unwilling to molest the prelates of England any longer, returned to the place whence he had come.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *ABBOT JOHN AND TAVISTOCK SCHOOLS.*

OUR next abbot, John (1224-1233), had been chaplain to Archbishop Langton, who was not only a man of action and a true patriot, but also one of the leading scholars of the day. In the fresh enthusiasm for learning which expressed itself in the energetic life of the Universities, Langton was not likely to permit Canterbury to fall from the position it had long held as a centre\* of intellectual activity. His chaplain would share this thirst for knowledge, and bring it with him to our western monastery.

We are told by Archbishop Parker, followed and supported by Camden, Risdon, and Thomas Warton, that there existed in Tavistock, as in many of our older abbeys, a Saxon school, for teaching the old language, in which their earliest charters were written. Such a school would become necessary, if at all, when the old form of English speech was dying out.

About the year 1200, after sixty years' neglect, English revived as a written speech in the Metrical Chronicle of Layamon. This work, in metre and in language, marks the transition from the old to the

\* STUBBS'S *Lectures on the Study of History at Oxford*, p. 142.

new. In metre it was most irregular, mixing rough blank verse with the Anglo-Saxon alliterative rhythm, and with the rhyming couplets borrowed from the French. In language it marks the definite beginning of modern English, not by its vocabulary, for it has very few new words, scarcely more than 50 in its 3000 lines; but by the loss of inflexions and breaking down of the old grammar, which changed the character of the language, and made it at once more loose in construction and more flexible. A scholar, like Abbot John, would see that this change would go further and further; and, therefore, it is possible that he established the Saxon school to prevent the old language being quite forgotten.

A deed of conveyance of 1754 places the Saxon school on the site of the Bedford hotel. It was probably a separate building, with the southern side of the cloisters against its northern wall; for the antiquary Browne Willis (1720) speaks of "the Saxon school erected for reading the laws and histories written in our mother tongue," as a large building then standing.

The Saxon school was pulled down in 1736, to make way for the abbey house, where the Bedford hotel now stands; but Willis tells us that in 1670 a new schoolroom and master's house had been built out of the ruins of the abbey church. These stood in and beyond the south-east corner of the present churchyard, replacing earlier buildings. They were taken down towards the end of the last century, when the schoolmaster had a house in West Street, and a schoolroom over a stable abutting on Church Lane. The Grammar school in Russell

Street, which is likely soon to be succeeded by an intermediate school, was built in 1836.

The Saxon school probably ceased to be used at the Reformation, and there is nothing to connect it directly with the Free, the Latin, and the Grammar schools of more recent times. The germs of these, and also of our elementary schools, may possibly be traced even earlier. For, before the Saxon school was thought necessary, teaching of two sorts, as I have said, was most likely going on in the abbey precincts. In one part of the cloisters, some simple-hearted monk would be teaching little children of the town; whilst in another, a monk of higher culture would be imparting to the sons of the gentry such Latin and higher learning as he possessed.

John, Earl of Bedford, had granted the market dues to the town in 1552, for two hundred years, for the support of the schools and bridges, and for other parish purposes. Consequently, in our recovered documents, the schoolhouse is first spoken of in 1553, when 6s. 8d. is paid for the "Sowth wyndow in the schole howse." In 1556 William Walkey was paid 8d. "for makyng of a beddestede for the Scole master." This was, probably, the "Peter Smyth, scolemaistr," who signs his name as a witness to a lease connected with the Maudlin hospital in 1554. In 1575 the vicar, Robert Knight, receives "for teaching the scholars," £10; and William Shere, "for teaching the children," £4, besides 6s. 8d. "for his house rent in the churchyard." In 1588 John Drake, "the schoolmaster, for teaching in the Grammar school, this year," is paid £12; and Nicholas Watts, "for wages for teaching of the little children," £4. In

the same year 9d. is paid "for setting up a chain for the dictionary in the schoolhouse." In 1623 Thomas Cole was schoolmaster.

In 1630 Mr. Cleake was schoolmaster at the same stipend as John Drake. This was, probably, the Tristram Cleake, who was vicar of Tavistock after John Blythman, and was succeeded in 1638 by George Hughes. May 19, 1641, "Thomas Balch Schoolemaster" is entered as having buried a "sonne," Francis. Our early records tell us that in 1657 and 1658 repairs were going on; for, amongst the receipts for those years, we find that Peter Jessop and Daniel Calamay were paid for carpentry at the schoolhouse, the timber being cut, hewed, and sawed at "Morle-ham." In 1659 a Mr. Torr was schoolmaster; for in Vicar Larkham's diary, 14th April, 1659, we read, "I delivered to Mr. Torr, schoolmaster, one of my books on the 'Attributes.'" In his sermons on the Wedding Supper\* (1652) Larkham complains bitterly that the funds which should have gone to pay the schoolmaster were shamefully wasted. In 1711 the new premises in the churchyard were occupied by Mr. Christopher Furneaux, "schoolmaster of this town," who also received £12 a year. He was succeeded by Mr. John Jago. This John Jago married Mrs. Mary Cudlip in 1712, and died vicar of St. Keverne in 1745. In 1728 Mr. Philip Hicke was schoolmaster; for our registers tell us that he had a daughter, Mary, baptised on 15th August in that year.

Later on, in the last century, the schoolhouse was occupied by another John Jago. He was son of the

\* P. 121. For particulars see Supplementary chap. i.



last, and was vicar from 1758 to 1796. Mr. Jago was succeeded, first as schoolmaster, then as vicar, by Richard Sleeman, grandfather of the late vicar of Whitchurch. Mr. Sleeman was succeeded by the Rev. R. V. Willesford, who was also curate of Tavistock and Brent Tor, and Rector of Coryton. In his time the school fell to its lowest depth, consisting, as a report of the time says, of only one or two scholars.

Dr. Beale worked up a good school on the new premises in Russell Street, where he was master from 1836 to 1846. Before his time private schools had flourished here, as in other parts of the country. In 1837 there were seventeen private schools in Tavistock, thirteen of which had begun since 1818. The most important was that conducted by Mr. Evans, minister of the Abbey Chapel, first at Kilworthy and afterwards at Parkwood. In 1837 the "little children" were taught in the Lancasterian school, and our National school came to its aid in 1839. Dr. Beale was succeeded by Rev. Henry Colson, who died at his post in 1850. Rev. William Newman came next, and when he was made rector of Coryton in 1857, Rev. Edward Spencer succeeded, and brought the school to its greatest height, both in name and numbers. It requires no prophet to foretell for an institution, which has shown such a phoenix-like power of revival, at least equal success under new auspices.

## CHAPTER V.

### *ALAN OF CORNWALL AND THE LAZAR-HOUSE.*

SOMETIME between 1102 and 1131, all church property in the Isles of Scilly was made over by Henry I. to the abbey of Tavistock, as we have related more particularly under Abbot Osbert. For a hundred years the little priory at Tresco and the cell at Holy Vale in St. Mary's, and possibly other cells in St. Martin's, St. Helen's, and St. Agnes, had been supplied by monks from our abbey. Now, in 1233, the Isles sent us back a governor. Alan of Cornwall, who was prior of Tresco, had most likely been promoted to that office because he had already, as a monk here, shown that he would make a good and wise ruler. He was invited to return as abbot of Tavistock, and he presided over the monastery from 1233 to 1248.

This was a dreary period for England. Henry III., freed from the tutelage of Hubert de Burgh and Peter des Roches, and presently driving into exile his brother-in-law, England's future patriot, Simon de Montfort, gave full sway to his own weakness. He engaged in feeble warfare with the princes of Wales and with Louis IX., the saintly king of France; he aided the popes in their suicidal conflict with the great emperor, his own brother-in-law, Frederick II.; and meanwhile he was filling all places of trust with foreigners, the relatives of his wife, Eleanor of Provence. And, whilst the king was getting money from all classes, by fair means and foul, to squander it upon his idle schemes, the popes Gregory IX. and

Innocent IV. were turning to account the hold that John's homage had given them over this country, and worrying clergy and laity alike out of all patience by their endless exactions.

Leprosy is said to have been prevalent in Western Europe in the time of Charlemagne; but, certainly, it was greatly increased by the Crusades; and by the time we have reached, every town of any size had its leper hospital or lazar-house. There was such a hospital in Tavistock, with a chapel attached to it, and dedicated jointly to St. Mary Magdalene and St. Theobald of Tavistock. This Maudlin chapel stood in the enclosed space to the north-east of our new church at Fitzford; and some meadows near by are still called the Maudlin Fields. We do not know when our leper hospital was founded, but there would have been need enough for it in the early part of the thirteenth century; and its foundation may be due, as likely as not, to Alan of Cornwall. As leprosy was brought from the East in ships, it would be likely to show itself sooner in the Isles of Scilly, where homeward-bound ships often touched, than so far inland as Tavistock. One of the smaller isles, St. Helen's, still has a disused pest-house standing on its shore. This isle seems to have been really called after St. Elidius, a bishop, probably from Ireland, who was buried, William of Worcester says, in the Isle of Scilly. There may have been an early confusion between this St. Elidius (who was, certainly, sometimes confused with St. Eligius or Eloy, bishop of Noyon) and St. Egidius, who is the same as St. Giles, the patron saint of lepers and outcasts. At all events Alan, having seen the use of a lazar-house on

St. Elidius, when he was prior of Tresco, was likely enough to turn his experience to good use when he became abbot of Tavistock, and establish our lazarus-house at the end of Ford Street.

According to Risdon, referred to by Mr. A. J. Kempe in his *Notices*, p. 19, the lazarus-house had an early competitor; for he says that Fitzford was originally a hospital, founded by the Tremaynes, and that it had also its own small chapel, dedicated to St. George. The earliest notice we have of our lazarus-house is in a deed of about 1340, in which Robert Bond, a warden of the hospital, with the consent of the brethren and the sisters, lets a garden, forty feet wide, to Nicholas of Romysleuu. Good works were kept up by associations, in those early days, quite as much as they are now. In September, 1374, Bishop Brantyngham offered an indulgence of twenty days to all penitents within the diocese of Exeter who should send contributions to the lepers' house dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene at Tavistock.\* A few days earlier, in the same month, the bishop had offered the same indulgence for aid given "for the support of the poor lepers of the hospital of Saint Margerite of Honiton."† On behalf of the Honiton lazarus-house Bishop Lacy made a similar offer in 1452.

Our lazarus-house, with its Maudlin chapel, was a separate foundation from the abbey, and, when the abbey lands were forfeited, still remained under the management of a prior and guild of its own. Our old documents tell us that Ralph Yrysh was prior in 1477,

\* OLIVER, p. 93.

† See *Memoir of Abbot Chard*, p. 33, by that diligent antiquary the late Dr. JAMES H. PRING, of Taunton.

and let the "Mawdelyn Parke" to Ralph Foster, for twenty years, at 12s. a year. Thomas Glanfelde was prior in 1528, and let a bit of ground, measuring nine feet, to John Glob, for tenpence a year. William Cole, in 1540, being then prior, leased for sixty years to Richard Foster, his wife Christina, and his son John, all the close and garden north of the hospital, bounded on the west by the "Spital lane." In 1542 Robert Isaac, called guardian and governor of the house and hospital of poor and infirm lepers, leased to Guido Leman a tenement and three gardens in Ford Street; and in 1554, Thomas Payne, "prior of the Spytle-house called the Mawdelene," let to Richard Russell, baker, all the gardens and appurtenances called "blynde hey," at 2s. a year.

In the 27th of Elizabeth, 1585, John Batte, then prior, and the "bretheryn and sustern of the same house," by deed indented under seal (of Virgin and Child), still preserved in the church, demised to John Ffytz, Esq., and William Houghton, Nicholas Glanville, Robert Moore, Edward Denys, Roger Upcote, Thomas Libbe, Richard Drake, and Thomas Sowton, the eight men chosen by the parish to be the dispensators for the church and parish and its poor, and for the lazar people of the hospital, for one thousand years, the "Mawdelyn" chapel with the chapel "haie" and "three closes called the Mawdelyn park," and one garden on the east of the "lazar lane," and also one meadow called the "Mawdelyn meade," near the water of Lambourne.\* The Maudlin chapel was still in use as late as the 20th of October, 1672,

\* The seal itself is in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. There is a recent impression in our public library.

when 30/6 was collected there for John Bazely, blacksmith, of Tavistock.

From the date of this last deed, 1585, the lazar-house seems to have been administered by the feoffees of the town charities. The other charities, having fallen into great confusion and abuse, were settled by Act of Parliament in 1762; their lands and tenements being conveyed to the Duke of Bedford, in return for the present Ford Street alms-houses, and a guaranteed annual payment of £120, just now exchanged for £150 Indian Stock. The lazar-house was not touched by this act of 1762, but, like some other old alms-houses in the town, lingered on past the middle of the present century without any proper management, and occupied by tenants who claimed their rooms as a sort of freehold, to be disposed of at their will. At last, about 1860, these tenants were bought out; the lazar-house and Maudlin chapel, which had all been divided into small tenements, were swept away, and from the proceeds of the sale of the old alms-houses the new "Maynard's Almshouse" was established in 1877.

There were many lazar-houses in Devonshire in mediæval times. Even so late as 1573-4 our wardens' account tells us of men "gathering for the lazar-house" at Pilton, and another for that in Honiton. Plympton also had its lazar-house, and in 1370 the prior thereof sued the prior of Plympton for a corrody consisting of one loaf of white and one of black bread, and a gallon of convent ale daily, of a mess of "Cochin des chaires" (*Cuisine de chair*) on every flesh-day, and a mess of "Cochin de peshon" (*poisson*) every fish-day.\* Even then the French

\* OLIVER, p. 152.

The last time this book  
was read was ~~10/11/86~~ 12/3/96  
Probably no one will ever read it again...BYE



would seem to have taken the lead in cookery. The leper-house at Honiton was partly rebuilt and re-endowed in 1530 by Thomas Chard, the last abbot of Ford and suffragan bishop, two years after he had restored his beautiful abbey.\* He made the head of his family, the Chards of Tracy in Awliscombe, trustees for the charity. In 1642 it passed from them to the rector, churchwardens, and overseers of the parish. The income has increased from £25 to £100; the hospital has been turned into an almshouse for ten or more occupants; the chapel is in good repair, and still used for divine service. With more careful management might not our lazarus-house have lasted as long and been as flourishing?

Father Damien's heroic death has awakened a fresh sympathy for lepers. Such sympathy was abundant in the time of Abbot Alan. Louis VIII. left money for their hospitals; Louis IX. would feed them with his own hand; St. Francis delighted to tend them; though, before his conversion, he says, he could not bear to look upon one. St. Hugh, twitted with his inability to heal them with his kiss, as St. Martin had done, replied, "St. Martin's kiss healed the body of the leper, but my kiss of the leper heals my soul." One likes to think that the poor outcasts were carefully tended here in Tavistock, instead of having to beg by the wayside with bell or clapper, and sleep in ditches, as they had to do then, in many places, all over Europe.

The modern substitute for the lazarus-house is the dispensary for out-door patients, which was opened in 1832, and was turned into a cottage hospital in 1887.

\* *Memoir of Abbot Chard.*



## CHAPTER VI.

*ABBOT ROBERT OF KITECNOL AND THE THREE  
SOVEREIGNS.*

WE know nothing of our next abbot, Robert, except that he was a monk of the abbey, and that he only held office for a few months; Thomas being appointed abbot in June of the same year, 1248. In the lack of any local history, let us take a glance at public events. In this same year the good king, Louis IX. of France, set out upon the last Crusade, perhaps the most disastrous of them all.

Their relation to the Crusades shows out well the different characters of the three chief rulers of the age—Henry III. of England, the Emperor Frederick the second, and St. Louis of France. Henry assumed the cross, but only as an excuse for getting more money out of his people, to be wasted, as usual, on foreign favourites or on idle extravagance. Henry was free from his father's vices. He was gentle and cultured. He was fond of literature. And Westminster Abbey, completed in 1245, is a lasting monument of his taste and munificence. But he had no faculty for ruling. He lavished his regard and his revenue on the foreign relatives of his wife and mother. By fair means or foul, he was always exacting money from one class or another; and he made no effort to protect his unfortunate people from the exactions of Rome, which were going on hand in hand with his own. Matthew of Paris, "the last and greatest"\* of

\* GREEN'S *History of the English People*, p. 142.

the monastic chroniclers, with whom Henry, on a visit to St. Albans, would often have a friendly chat, calls him "the king with the heart of wax"; a man, that is, of no definite character, always taking impressions from others. The great Florentine poet Dante, also a contemporary, passes upon him nearly the same judgment, when he puts him in purgatory, not "for what he *had* done, but for what he had *not* done"; for doing nothing worthy of his station.

Twenty years earlier, in 1228, when our patriot archbishop, Stephen Langton, was succeeded by the saintly, and equally patriotic, Edmund Rich, the Emperor Frederick had started on his crusade. The most enlightened ruler of his time, his learning and wit brought him under suspicion of infidelity. To free himself from this suspicion, he embarked on the Crusade, and issued laws for the suppression of the unfortunate heretics of Lombardy, far more cruel than any decrees of the pagan emperors against the Christians of the first three centuries. Perhaps, like those early emperors, he thought that independence in religion implied treason to the state. At all events Frederick was not a persecutor by natural disposition, any more than Marcus Aurelius, for he was completely tolerant both of Greeks and Moslems in Sicily; and when he was lodging in Jerusalem, and the kadi, out of respect to the emperor, had stopped the muezzin from announcing the hour of prayer, as usual, by reading aloud from the Koran; "You are wrong," said Frederick, "to neglect on my account your duty, your law, and your religion."

The implacable hostility of the popes, Gregory

IX. and Innocent IV., followed Frederick everywhere. He recovered Jerusalem by treaty with the sultan of Egypt; but the papal anathema that hung over him was not removed; and, on his return, Christendom was scandalized, when the pope, having just finished the horrible crusade against the Albigenses and established the diabolical machinery of the Inquisition to complete its work, called men to a new crusade against the emperor, who had himself borne the cross to such good purpose.

Louis IX. having wintered at Cyprus, crossed to Egypt in 1249, and presently took Damietta. But he had no military talent, and his faith and goodness did not bring success to his arms. Nearly all his troops were destroyed, and he and his nobles were only redeemed with heavy ransoms. Louis was a contrast to Frederick in everything. Frederick, in his tastes and habits and opinions, was like a scholar of the Renaissance—born before his time. Louis is perhaps the most perfect representation of mediæval Christianity. In the rigour of his fastings and scourgings, in the intensely religious direction of his whole life, he was “a monk upon the throne.”

But, though religious zeal might impair his judgment—as in his crusade and when he wished to give up Normandy to our Henry III.—on the whole, he was a wise and energetic ruler; ready, with all his reverence for the church, to protect France from papal usurpation, and innocent laymen from unjust ecclesiastical censures. He was so just that neighbouring princes had perfect confidence in his arbitration. He delighted to give judgment to his people, seated on a carpet in the forest of Vincennes. He

loved all men except Jews, heretics, and infidels. These he hated utterly, and would only answer heretics with the sword. Austere to himself, Louis had a wonderful gentleness and kindly humour with his friends and dependants, as may be seen in the charming memoirs of Joinville. "He asked me once whether I would sooner be a leper or commit a deadly sin. I said I would rather have committed thirty deadly sins than be a leper. Ah! poor idler, he said, you are deceived, for no leprosy is so filthy as deadly sin; and the soul that is guilty of such is like the devil in hell." Louis tried to conquer his own sins by making his confessor scourge him every Friday, till the blood came; and during Lent the scourgings were inflicted on Wednesdays as well as Fridays.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *ABBOT THOMAS, BISHOP GROSSETESTE, AND OXFORD UNIVERSITY.*

FROM 1248 to 1257, when Thomas was abbot, was the dreariest time of the "long, dismal reign" of Henry III. It might well be described in the words with which Matthew Paris sums up the history of the year 1252: "England, trampled under foot by foreigners, bowing the neck to many masters, deprived of the sincere affection of its king, and submitting to the most abject conditions, pined away, despairing and inconsolable; and, worst of all, the deadly hatred between the church and the people daily increased." The hatred of the church was due to the "execrable extortions of the popes," and to the

appropriation of English livings to foreigners and absentees. This had come to such a pass, that inquiries made in this year (1252) by the great and good bishop of Lincoln, the learned and active Grosseteste (Greathead), showed that English preferments in the hands of strangers amounted to 70,000 marks, about three times the king's annual revenue. These strangers were favoured by the king, who acted as the servant of the pope, showered benefits upon the Provençal and Poitevin families of his wife and mother, and only seemed to care for any class of his own subjects if he could squeeze money out of them to waste upon his idle schemes and careless extravagance. So hard was the double pressure from pope and king, that the people said that all that was left them was to find out which was the heavier, the upper millstone or the nether.

In 1250 our abbot might have been trembling in his shoes. Henry had managed to get his wife's uncle, Boniface of Savoy, a handsome young man, worldly and unlearned, made archbishop of Canterbury. Boniface found his see heavily in debt, and he wanted money to help his brothers in their ambitious plans. Already the excellent Grosseteste had claimed the right to visit all the churches of his huge diocese, and had gone about, in the spirit of the friars whom he favoured, preaching and correcting, rebuking the monks for ease and idleness, and parochial clergy for such worldliness as taking part in stage plays. Boniface would improve upon this example, and declared his intention of visiting with the rod of discipline the churches and monasteries of the whole province of Canterbury. Our abbey, like most others,

had probably allowed some of the strict rules of St. Benedict to fall into disuse; and if the archbishop had travelled as far as Tavistock, our monks would have had to pay heavily for their irregularities, as the monks of Faversham and the canons of Canterbury had done. Their vexation would have been all the greater from knowing that their visitor did not really care two straws for their Rule, but, like his king and patron, was seeking a decent excuse for getting their money. Fortunately for Abbot Thomas and his monks, the crafty scheme of Boniface was effectually checked in London. His growing wrath at the refusal of the London clergy to receive him as their visitor vented itself upon the unfortunate sub-prior of St. Bartholomew, whom in his fury he beat and crushed, almost to death, in the choir of his own church. But he could not overcome the quiet resistance of the bishop of London and the dean of St. Paul's; so he presently abandoned his claims, and being wise in his generation, and thinking he might lead those whom he could not drive, he came back, after a short stay abroad, and joined himself, outwardly at least, to the English party, headed by those truly great and unselfish patriots, Simon de Montfort and Robert Greathead.

The association of these noble men in the grand cause of English liberty, the one representing the church and the other the state, reminds us of the similar friendship, in furtherance of the same good cause—England for the English—of Earl Godwin and our own Abbot Lyfing, in the days of foreign-hearted kings before the Conquest. The English people were not irreligious; they were simply alienated

by spiritual tyranny. They began to choose for themselves, and their new saints were St. Robert of Lincoln, who laboured on his death-bed to prove that Rome was Antichrist, and St. Simon the Righteous, who died under the ban of the church for English liberty on the field of Evesham.

When William of Worcester visited Tavistock in 1478, he found amongst other saints in the calendar of the church of the monastery, "1264. Saint Simon de Montfort, 4th day of August;" and amongst the books found in the library by Leland\* was *Lincolniensis super libros Posteriorum*. As to De Montfort, we have † Stubbs's deliberate sentence that he was "a great and good man." As to Grosseteste, for his brave protests against all the clerical abuses of the time, and especially for his celebrated letter to Pope Innocent IV., given us by Matthew Paris under the year 1253, he has been sometimes spoken of as a reformer before the Reformation. He was indeed a reformer, as Colet and More were reformers, preferring the study of the Bible to that of the schoolmen, and protesting with all his might against the selfishness and worldliness of the clergy of all ranks. But he had no doctrinal dispute with Rome, and it never occurred to him to question the supremacy of the pope in matters ecclesiastical. ‡

To return to Boniface. Bent, as we have seen, on conciliation, he visited Oxford in 1253, which was pleased enough to have its importance recognised

\* DUGDALE, p. 493.

† *Later Plantagenets*, p. 201.

‡ See preface to his letters in *Chronicles, &c.*, edited under the Master of the Rolls. The editor, H. R. Luard, says that, as a champion of the right, "he stands quite unrivalled in our history."



whether in politics or in controversy. During the reign of Henry III. it had risen to be one of the great universities of Europe. Its prosperity is another bright gleam in a dark time, to be set beside the calm constancy of such a hero as Simon de Montfort. Oxford was crowded with scholars of many countries and of all ranks, from the wealthy young noble with his retainers to the poor student who had to beg his daily bread. Here were the head-quarters of the true democracy of learning and merit. Here Edmund Rich, the learned and saintly predecessor of Boniface, had introduced the study of Aristotle. Here Grosseteste had lectured in the house of the Franciscans; and here his friend Roger Bacon was in some measure anticipating his greater namesake by insisting on a better method of study and a wider sweep of knowledge. So great was the influence of Oxford that it was regarded as the weather-glass of the country; and a row at Oxford was supposed to be an omen of national conflict. After sumptuous entertainment, Boniface and his Provençals were obliged to confess that in wit and eloquence, in wealth and manners, Oxford was a worthy rival of Paris.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *JOHN OF NORTHAMPTON AND THE LIBRARY.*

JOHN OF NORTHAMPTON was abbot from 1257 for two years, Philip Trencheful, his successor, being appointed by Bishop Bronescombe in August, 1259, after the office had been offered by the monks to some unknown person who declined it. We know

nothing of this Abbot John, but that he had been cellarer of the abbey of Bermondsey. There are, however, some reasons why our thoughts should turn to the abbey library about this time. The Benedictine always had a better name for learning than any other monasteries; and it is especially to the monks of this order that we owe the preservation of the MSS., not merely of the Scriptures and the Fathers, but also of many of the Greek and Latin classics. We know that our abbey afterwards more than held its own in literature, for it possessed the first printing press in Devonshire. From this was issued,\* in 1525, Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, translated into English in 1410 by John Walter, abbot of Osney. It claims to have been "emprented in the exempt monastery of Tavestoke in Denshyre, by me Dan Thomas Rychard, monke of the sayd monastery, to the instant desire of the right worshypful Esquier, mayster Robert Langdon, Anno D. MDXXV." In 1834, at the sale of Heber's library, a copy was purchased for the Duke of Bedford for £63. There is a copy in black letter, in excellent condition, in the library of Exeter College, Oxford. From this copy the notice above as to the printing has been extracted, through the kindness of the Rev. C. W. Boase, fellow and tutor of Exeter College, to whom, with many generations of undergraduates, I am deeply indebted for help in the proper appreciation and study of history. Oliver therefore made a mistake between the printer and his patron, in thinking that the printer's name in the Oxford copy was Robert Langdon. This Robert Langdon, Mr. Boase tells me, was of

\* For fuller details of these books, see Appendix B.

Keeverell in St. Martin's-by-Looe; and A. J. Kempe in his *Notices* says he was LL.D. and nephew of Bishop Langdon, a great patron of letters; referring to Wood's *Athen. Oxon.*, vol. ii., p. 646, as his authority. In 1534 a Confirmation of the Charter of the Devonshire Tinnars was printed here, with statutes made with their consent at Crockerntor in 1510, our abbots being lessees of the Devonshire stannaries and controllers of the royal mines in Devon and part of Cornwall. Just at this time literary activity had been quickened by contact with the Greeks and Arabs in the Crusades; so that a prelude to the great revival of letters two centuries later was begun with the study of Aristotle. When the ascetic Cistercians of Ford Abbey, and even the Friars, were coming to the front in learning, our Benedictines were likely to agree with the saying of a Norman sub-prior a hundred years earlier, "a monastery without a library (*sine armario*) is like a castle without an armoury (*sine armamentario*)." Monasteries were not indeed formed for anything but for prayer and meditation, manual labour simply being ordered to keep out the devils that wait upon idleness. But study was not forbidden, and as many who chose this secluded life were men of culture, and as the monastic life, so free from distractions, offered every encouragement to study, it naturally came to pass that the monks, for a long time, took the lead both in learning and in teaching. It had been so at Bec under Lanfranc and Anselm; and about the same time, the worthy abbot of Gorgona, near Pisa, was content to have one shirt at a time and lie in bed whilst it was washed, that, amongst other needful

things, he might supply his monks with a library. Just at this time, owing to royal and papal exactions, or to mismanagement, the revenues of our abbey were in a poor way. Meanwhile Plympton was encroaching upon us in annual income, and the Cistercian abbey at Newenham, founded in 1247, was likely to surpass us in strictness of discipline and in sanctity. In the midst of so many flourishing religious houses, a thoughtful abbot would be very likely to say, "Let us, at least, keep up our reputation as the first monastery in Devon for learning." Therefore, it is probable that the library of our abbey made a start, about this time, when John of Northampton was abbot.

A little room would have held our two or three hundred volumes. But it was well to provide for the future; and besides, the more rare volumes were fastened by chains, each to its own desk; and other desks were wanted for the best writers amongst the brethren to copy MSS., either their own, so that they might have duplicates for exchange, or those lent by some kind neighbour, but only on receipt of a substantial pledge. As copying good books was regarded as a sort of expiation for personal faults, there would not be any lack of copyists.

As to books,\* there was probably one complete Bible, wisely called, from Jerome's time, *Bibliotheca*, or "the library," and worth about £1000 of present money, for the mere copying. There would be many portions of Scripture with glosses or short notes; especially in the Old Testament, the Psalms,

\* MAITLAND'S *Dark Ages*, *passim*; also DUGDALE, p. 493, as to some books in our library when Leland visited Tavistock, about 1540.

Job, Proverbs, and some of the prophets. In the New Testament many copies of the Gospels and several of the Epistles. Two or three copies of the Gospels would be splendidly bound in gold, silver, or ivory, and richly illuminated in gold and colours.

In theology, there would be most of St. Augustine's works, some of Cyprian, Jerome, and Hilary, the sermons of Gregory the Great and Ambrose; perhaps some of Chrysostom, Basil, or Athanasius, turned into Latin; almost certainly the history and commentaries of our native Bede, and that favourite with monks of a mystical turn of mind, the *Celestial Hierarchy*, attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite, and done into Latin by John Scotus Erigena. Amongst the books most read would be Cassian of Marseilles on the monastic life, and Boethius' *De Consolatione*.

In classics, historians, orators, and philosophers, like Livy, and Cicero, and Seneca, were heartily welcomed; using them was called "spoiling the Egyptians." There was, for a long time, a strong objection to the classic poets, as unworthy of a Christian's study. Yet, even as early as 855, we find an abbot of Ferrieres borrowing a Terence from the pope; and by Dante's time, Virgil was thought his fitting companion through the shady realms of purgatory. Let us hope that the monks of Tavistock six hundred years ago had learnt the happy secret of combining devoutness of spirit with mental culture.

There would also have been in our library some treatises on canon law to guide the abbots in any dispute with their bishop; and Constantinus *Aphri-*

*canus de Re Medica*,\* to help the medical monks at their work in the infirmary and the still-house.

Tavistock is worthily carrying on the good traditions of the Benedictines, in being able to boast of one of the earliest, and, for the size of the town, one of the best, public libraries in the West of England. It was founded by John Taylor of Norwich in 1799, and it now adds to its shelves about three hundred volumes a year; more, probably, than the library of our abbey ever contained. Mrs. Rundle Charles has just presented the library with £50 worth of books, in memory of her father, Mr. John Rundle, who was M.P. for Tavistock from 1835 to 1843, and an early supporter of the library.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *ABBOTS PHILIP AND ALURED AND BISHOP BRONESCOMBE.*

IN May 1258, Henry III., being refused further aid by Parliament, for conquering the kingdom of Sicily, which he had accepted, as a gift from the pope, for his second son Edmund, sent his clerk, Simon Passelaw, "a crafty and lying man," to extort more money from certain religious houses. Tavistock being under royal patronage, was probably one of these favoured houses; and very likely the king's exactions explain the fact, that on the death of Abbot John of Northampton, no one could be found ready to take his place.

Fortunately for the country in general, and for Tavistock in particular, this was the last of Henry's

\* This was one of the books found here by Leland. DUGDALE, p. 493.

many exactions; for in June, by the Provisions of Oxford, the Parliament transferred the governing power from the weak king, who had at last worn out the patience of his long-suffering people, to Simon de Montfort and a Council of State.

So much time was spent in offering the post of abbot to men who declined the honour, that the appointment lapsed to Walter Bronescombe, the energetic bishop of Exeter; whose work and character have lately been disclosed to us in Prebendary Hingeston-Randolph's most laborious and valuable work, *The Episcopal Registers of the Diocese of Exeter*.

On August 10th, 1259, the bishop, then staying at his manor of Chidham, in Surrey, provided our abbey with a worthy father in Philip Trencheful, a monk of St. Swithun's at Winchester; "a man," he says, "as we have heard from trustworthy persons, especially prudent and discreet; circumspect also, as well in temporal as in spiritual matters." On the very same day, the bishop petitioned the king to restore the temporalities of the abbey; a request which was granted on August 16th. We should like to know whether the worthy men, who refused the office of abbot when the income was wanting, sighed for the honour, now that its worldly wealth was restored.

On October 12th, of the same year, 1259, the active bishop was resting for a day or two at St. Germans, in the midst of a month's visitation of his large and scattered diocese, during which he dedicated no less than twenty-one churches. Thither came to him, no doubt by appointment, across the Tamar from Tavistock, the abbot of his own providing,



Philip Trencheful; and there, in the fine old Norman church, he received the episcopal blessing, made his public profession of obedience, and presently was on his way home again with letters of installation addressed to the archdeacon of Totnes. But all this elaborate process had to be gone through again very soon; for Abbot Philip died within the year.

Then Alured the prior, who had probably declined the offer twelve months before, when the abbey was impoverished by the extortions of our royal patron, was quite willing to step upward from prior to abbot. He was chosen by the monks, but with some irregularity; likely enough there were factions amongst the brethren, and some preferred an outsider to their worthy prior, who was perhaps too well known to them to be regarded with the reverence due to a spiritual father. Or does the name show that Alured was of Saxon birth; and, though his elevation confirms the fact that the differences and jealousies between Norman and Saxon had been well-nigh forgotten, may there have been a lingering feeling in the minds of some of the monks of Norman descent, that they would rather not have one of the churlish Saxon race to rule over them?

At all events, the election was irregular, but not so irregular as to induce the bishop of Exeter to put it aside. So we find in the Episcopal Register, for the year 1260, the following account: "On the vigil of the nativity of St. Mary (7th September) at La-whitton, brother Alured the elected of Tavistock obtained letters in this form: 'To the most serene and reverend Lord Henry, by the grace of God, illustrious king of England, lord of Ireland, and duke

of Aquitaine, Walter, by the mercy of our God, bishop of Exeter, peace in Him who gives peace to kings and after triumph a crown. We have to inform your Excellency that, the Abbey of Tavistock in our diocese being vacant, and the right to provide the said monastery with a fit pastor, having, according to the canon law devolved upon us, owing to some flaw in the election, we have thought it well, with pontifical authority, and of our special favour, to provide the said monastery with our beloved son Alured, prior of the same, although not elected with the usual formalities; he being, indeed, a man, as we have learnt for certain, prudent and discreet, and circumspect, as well in temporal as in spiritual matters. And we entreat your Serenity, as with you lies, that your Highness may think it well to complete what is necessary for his having charge of the temporalities.”

If weak kings like Henry had to be addressed with all these fulsome titles of respect, can we wonder that they were spoilt, and fancied that their only business was to enjoy themselves at their people's expense? One hopes that both Philip and Alured deserved the praise bestowed upon them by Bishop Bronescombe; but the praise would have been more obviously sincere, if it had not been precisely the same in both cases. Another entry tells us that “the lord bishop blessed Alured in the great church at Exeter on the day of Saint Michael in the same year. And he (Alured) made his profession, and laid it upon the high altar.” Alured had barely two years in which to show his prudence; for his successor was appointed in September, 1262.

## CHAPTER X.

### *ABBOT JOHN CHUBBE AND SEQUESTRATION.*

IF Alured takes back our thoughts to Saxon times, the name of his unworthy successor John Chubbe seems to connect the history of six hundred years ago with the Tavistock of our own time. Then an Abbot Chubbe wasted the property of the church; now, for more than a quarter of a century, a namesake of his, our worthy caretaker, Mrs. Elizabeth Chubb, has been doing her best to keep the church free from dust and cobwebs.

The election of brother John Chubbe took place on the 8th of September, 1262. It was not strictly canonical, but Bronescombe accepted the Convent's choice as he had done in the case of Alured, and gave the new abbot his blessing at Horsleigh, 2nd February, 1262-3. The times were agitated. In 1264 the hollow truce between the court and the barons came to an end. The king and prince Edward took up arms, and, after some slight successes, were utterly defeated by de Montfort at Lewes. De Montfort was indeed for the moment "in all but name a king." But he was as wise in council as in war; and, to strengthen his government, he summoned a parliament in 1265, in which there were added to the prelates and peers one hundred of the inferior dignified clergy, two knights from each county, and two representatives from every city, borough, and cinque port. For some time they only formed one "House"; but thus our representative system of government

was established, and, in principle at least, our House of Commons had its beginning; for Edward I., deservedly called "the greatest of the Plantagenets," was an apt pupil of the great and good earl, in politics as well as in war, and under his rule the "Commons" became a recognised part of the English constitution.

Though de Montfort's reforms were carried out as quietly and discreetly as possible, a time of civil contention must be, more or less, a time of disorder. Our Abbot Chubbe seems to have used the opportunities of the time, or rather abused them, to the fullest extent; for he was so irregular and so wasteful, that he was suspended in 1265, and solemnly deposed by Bishop Bronescombe in the chapter-house, 19th March, 1269.

It would seem that at first the abbot's bad example leavened the whole monastery. The monks are included in the charge of mismanagement, and all the property of the abbey is sequestrated, and given into the charge of the rector of Monkokehampton. The deed of sequestration shows what large property was at stake, and gives a sample of the legal formalities in use among our law-loving ancestors six hundred years ago.

On the Vigil of St. Mark the Evangelist the lord bishop committed the sequestration of the churches of the abbey of Tavistock to Robert, rector of the church of Monkokehampton, in the following form:\*

"To all who shall see this writing, Walter, by divine mercy bishop of Exeter, greeting in the Lord. Know ye that the abbot and convent of Tavistock were

\* *Episcopal Registers of the Diocese of Exeter*, vol. i. p. 266.

legally cited to appear before us on the morrow of St. George (24th April) in the church of Pilton, to show by what right they hold, and keep appropriated to their use, the parish churches of Tavistock,\* Lamerton, Milton, Brentor, Abbotsham, North Petherwin, and Hatherleigh, the chapel of Monkokehampton, some annual pensions from the churches of Burrington, Werrington, Denbury, and Antony, with certain annual tithes from the parishes of Shevioke and Rame, and to set forth what right they have over all this; and the same abbot and convent did by no means appear on the day fixed, but stubbornly absented themselves, and wastefully squandered the fruits and produce of the said churches, chapel, pensions, and tithes; and we, on account of the aforesaid stubbornness and wastefulness, relying both on our ordinary and our delegated authority, have sequestrated into our hands the fruits and produce of the same churches, chapel, pensions, and tithes, and have ordered them to be kept under our sequestration until the commands of the church are reverently obeyed. The custody of this whole aforesaid sequestration we have committed, and do commit, to our beloved son Robert, rector of the church at Monkokehampton, charging the same to guard safely, or have guarded, the whole said sequestration, by himself, or by another or others whom he may think fit to be entrusted therewith, restraining opponents and rebels by ecclesiastical censure. We, moreover, will cause

\* In the original the names are spelt Tavistoke, Lambertone, Mideltone, Brintetorre, Albedesham, Nordpydrewyn, Hatherleghe, Monchocmentone, Burnintone, Wlfrintone, Defnebery, Auntone, Sevieche, and Rame.

to be observed inviolate, any sentences of excommunication or suspension that have been, or shall be issued under our authority by the same rector against the stubborn or rebellious. Given at Tawton (Bishop's Tawton) on the day aforesaid."

This was not merely one of the struggles, then so frequent, for episcopal authority over religious houses. It was an earnest attempt to remove a public scandal. For John Chubbe, as we shall see, was a thoroughly unprincipled man, wanting altogether in truth and honesty. On the other hand, Bishop Bronescombe was a man of mark, respected alike for his energy and integrity. Later on in the same year, 1265, after the defeat of the good Earl Simon at Evesham, our bishop's name is the first on the list of commissioners appointed to settle differences; and in October, 1266, he is at Coventry helping to draw up the terms of the equitable amnesty known as the "Dictum of Kenilworth."

## CHAPTER XI.

### *ABBOT JOHN CHUBBE AND HIS DEPOSITION.*

MATTHEW PARIS\* says that the year 1265 was notorious for the rapacious acts of robbers; and, as an example, he tells us how fifty daring men pillaged a nunnery near St. Albans, and how the brave peasantry rose up against them and overcame them. We learn also that the barons of de Montfort's party held out for three years, and that the country was in a chronic condition of civil war, just that state of disorganization which gives their opportunity to

\* MATTHEW PARIS, A.D. 1269, Bohn, vol. iii. p. 372.

robbers and lawless men of all kinds, from the battle of Evesham in 1265 to the close of the year 1268. Matthew was a monk of St. Albans, but he was a thorough Englishman, and he speaks in such terms as these of the popular hero, whose memory a papal legate was execrating: "The noble earl Simon gave up not only his property but also his person to defend the poor from oppression, and to maintain justice and the rights of the kingdom. He was distinguished for his learning. Attention to divine duties was a pleasure to him. He was temperate and frugal, and put great confidence in the prayers of religious men. In matters of difficulty, he relied upon the advice of St. Robert, surnamed Grosstête, bishop of Lincoln, being encouraged by him to take up the cause of the people, and even to fight for it, as if he were fighting in a crusade. He was bold in speech and of a severe aspect. Rumour says that he wrought many miracles after his death, but they were not made publicly known for fear of kings."

In 1269 the country was pacified, and Prince Edward, whose tact and courage had chiefly brought about this happier state of things, thought it safe to accept Louis IX.'s invitation to accompany him on his last and fatal Crusade. Louis was so anxious to have Edward with him, that he offered to pay all his expenses. Matthew Paris, who could admire good and patriotic men of both parties, does not wonder that the king of France should think himself fortunate, if he could secure such a companion, for, as he says, "Edward was a man of lofty stature, of great courage and daring, and strong beyond measure."



Considering the disorganised state of society, and that the bishop of Exeter was much absent from his diocese helping the wise men of the time to put things straight, it is no wonder that John Chubbe should have continued to preside over our abbey, in a chaotic sort of way, for more than three years after his suspension in April, 1265. But in 1269, the general order being restored, the misdeeds of our abbot were brought to light and punished.

Bishop Bronescombe's Register\* gives a long and elaborate deed of deposition. In its preamble it declares that, "As it is right to cherish all fruitful plants in the church of God, so is it right to extirpate and expel from the Lord's garden the dry and barren trees which no care can make fruitful, that they may be consumed in sorrow and anguish." Then, in substance, it tells us that the abbot of Tavistock had continued in his evil course after repeated warning and in spite of the most solemn promises of amendment. Being excommunicated he made a show of repentance and was absolved; but presently his heart was hardened and he broke out again. Again he made a solemn profession of penitence and submission with the four Gospels as witnesses, and once more he was forgiven. Yet, after this, his conduct was worse than ever; and the bishop, at the urgent entreaty of the monks, held two enquiries on the spot with the assistance of trustworthy men, both of his own Order and of others. It was charged against the abbot, that, having been suspended from managing the property

\* *Episcopal Registers of Diocese of Exeter*, vol. i. p. 267; also in OLIVER, p. 96, num. v.

of the abbey because of his intolerable wastefulness and irregularity, he hindered the administrator, appointed with the consent of the monks, from performing his duties, and went on in his career of wastefulness. Nay, more, despising all monastic rules, he acted like a thief, and with his accomplices attacked one of the monks as he was celebrating divine service, violently stripped him of the sacred vestments, dragged him from the church and had him shut up a prisoner in his chamber. Not even content with this, casting aside all fear of God, he made a terrible assault on some of the monks, who from fear of him had taken refuge in the church. He also broke down the doors of the treasury, and violently carried off the chest containing the common seal and the charter and the title deeds of the monastery, as well as books and documents and the consecrated chalices. And the two monks appointed to guard the seal he took with violence in the church, and kept them shut up all night in his chamber, until they should do what he wished about the seal and the other things. Other enormities he committed, to the danger of his own soul, the loss of the monastery, and the offence of many. Moreover, unrestrained by the sentence of the greater excommunication, he had taken part in divine service. For these many and repeated offences John Chubbe was suspended from his clerical office for three years, and deposed, deprived, and totally removed from his charge as abbot of Tavistock.

Such was the end of the enquiry held in the chapter house of the abbey on the 19th of March, 1269, and thus Bishop Bronescombe did his best to

cut off a diseased limb (*putridum membrum*) from the fair body of the church.

It is interesting, as showing what an essentially tolerant and conservative people we are, that just now, in 1890, Archbishop Benson should be seeking to recover some of this wholesome episcopal discipline.

## CHAPTER XII.

### *ABBOT ROBERT AND EDWARD I.*

OUR next abbot, Robert, was blessed by Bishop Bronescombe 6th April, 1270, nearly thirteen months after John Chubbe had been deposed. He was ruler here from 1270 to 1285.

During these years, Edward I.\* who succeeded his weak father in 1272, proved himself a worthy descendant of his great-grandfather Henry II., as statesman, lawgiver, and warrior. In war, he soon completed the first part of his plan for consolidating the empire by the conquest of Wales. A succession of great princes—the lords of Snowdon, and the weakening of England by internal strife, had secured practical independence to Wales for nearly a hundred years. The struggle had awakened the slumbering bardic energy of the people; and there had been a wonderful outbreak of patriotic song, stirring to war, celebrating victory, and daring to express the hope that the down-trodden, hardy-driven Celt might even yet recover his long-lost lands from the Saxon and

\* STUBBS' *Illustrations of English Constitutional History*, p. 147; and *Early Plantagenets*, p. 224. Compare also GREEN'S *History of the English People*, p. 195.

Norman invader. Any such dreams of independence or of conquest were thoroughly dispersed by the submission of Llewellyn in 1277, and his death in 1282.

We are right in feeling sympathy with these brave people in their fight for freedom; all the more that the Welsh fought and failed, just as our own English ancestors had done against the Normans two hundred years before. We can see, now, that the conquest of Wales by the English, like the conquest of England by the Normans, was to bring about good in the end; but that should not interfere with our pity and respect for the brave sufferers, in either case.

As Edward's persistence secured the conquest of Wales, so by his moderation and wise statesmanship he did his best to conciliate the country, and Wales was quiet for a hundred years.

Edward was, indeed, a great and wise ruler. His ambition was to be the king of a strong, united, and contented people. In spite of the disaster at Evesham, the efforts of de Montfort and the barons had made it clear that England could only be well and safely governed with the goodwill and consent of the nation at large. Edward accepted this position and honourably fulfilled its duties. In his cruelty towards David prince of Wales, and afterwards towards Wallace, he showed indeed that inclination to strain the letter of the law harshly, for his own purpose, which was one of the worst features of the strong-willed, legal-minded Angevin princes. But as to his English subjects, Edward was fully bent upon developing national rights, as distinguished from feudal privileges; and in carrying out his

purpose he was true to his motto, *pactum serva*, "keep your promise." This motto, engraved on his tomb, is a striking proof of the manly, straightforward character of the man and his time, and is in singular contrast with the craft and subtlety that took the place of honest strength of character, in nearly all the courts of Europe, two hundred years later, and made policy another word for treachery.

Edward was wise enough to profit by the example of the great Earl Simon in politics, as well as in military tactics. From his first parliament he took care to secure, through local commissioners, the approval of the commonalty—*communitates*. But, like all truly great men, he was ever learning. His attempts at parliamentary representation improved slowly through the lessons of experience; and in 1295 we have the complete model of our parliament based upon the rule of Roman law, "that which touches all should be approved by all." Here we have the barons summoned by the king's special writ; the sheriffs ordered to send up two knights chosen by each shire, two citizens chosen by each city, and two burgesses by each borough; and the clergy represented, not only by their bishops, deans, and archdeacons, but also by their own chosen proctors.

As we have seen, the relations of church and state have never been settled quite satisfactorily from the public recognition of Christianity by Constantine down to our own day, when nearly half the clergy refuse to obey the decisions of the privy council. Edward tried to do evenhanded justice in this delicate matter. In favour of the clergy, besides their

representatives sitting in parliament, proctors chosen by them were invited to convocation; and as the clergy preferred taxing themselves in convocation to taking their place with the rest of the nation in parliament, this became a very important privilege.

On the other hand, the church was curtailed of a certain amount of liberty by the statute of Mortmain, 1279. Though this act refers, in the first place, to the "religious," that is to monks and such like, yet it expressly includes all others who buy or sell land, or receive it "under cover of a gift," so that, by any means, it passes into the dead hand—*ad manum mortuam*. The object of the law was to prevent the transfer of land to religious foundations; for thereby it became *dead*, that is, it did not produce its fair proportion of service to the state or of taxes to the king. Here, as elsewhere, Edward I. was completing what Henry II. had begun; for in police and the administration of justice, as well as in politics, he gave permanent form to what had been hitherto in embryo.

This was, also, the time for pruning and defining the great principles that knight and burgher had been struggling for under John and Henry III. It was a period of great lawyers; and Judges Bracton\* and Britton helped Edward to earn his title of the British Justinian. The king had good examples in Louis IX. of France, in the Emperor Frederick II., and in Alfonso-the-Wise of Castile. He succeeded Louis as the chosen arbitrator of national disputes.

\* Bratton Fleming and Bratton Clovelly, in Devon, and Bratton Court, near Minehead, in Somerset, all claim to be his birthplace. He was buried in Exeter Cathedral in 1268.

Such arbitration was sorely needed when the struggle between France and Aragon for the possession of Sicily was stained by the massacre of 8,000 Frenchmen at the Sicilian Vespers, and Count Ugolino was starved to death with two sons and three grandsons in his dungeon at Pisa.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### *ABBOT ROBERT AND THE RIGHTS OF THE ABBEY.*

ROBERT was "blest," or instituted, at Newenham abbey, near Axminster, a favourite resting-place of Bishop Bronescombe. This abbey\* had been founded by the Mohuns of Dunster in 1247. It was a Cistercian, that is, a reformed Benedictine house; like Ford abbey in the same deanery of Honiton, which had been now, for nearly a hundred years, under the patronage of the Courtenays; and like our neighbouring abbey of Buckland, which was founded in 1278, during Robert's tenure of office, by Amicia, Countess of Devon.

The Lady Amicia was the widow of Baldwin de Redvers, the fourth earl of Devonshire of that name. She endowed her abbey with the manors of Buckland, Bickleigh, Walkhampton, and Collumpton, and it afterwards acquired the rectories of Buckland, † of Bampton, and of "Walkehampton with Shittiſtor." The first monks, who were brought from Quarr, in the Isle of Wight, began religious services at once, without

\* OLIVER, p. 357.

† *Ibid.* p. 392, in the valuation under Henry VIII.



episcopal sanction. For this they were laid under suspension and interdict by Bishop Bronescombe, and the sentence was only relaxed in 1280,\* at the request of Queen Eleanor.

The Rolls of Hundreds, 3 Edward I., † give us the following, as to the privileges of our abbey in the year 1274. "The presentment of the borough of Tavistock. They say that the place where the township and abbey of Tavistock now stand belonged at one time to Adelred, king of England, before the Conquest, and that he gave it to Count Ordulph, his brother. The same Ordulph, with the leave of the aforesaid king, caused the abbey, which now is, to be raised as an absolute and perpetual gift. A certain abbot of the same place built the aforesaid town, which is now worth eight pounds a year. The abbot holds it from the lord king in chief by barony, together with his other lands belonging to the barony, for fifteen knights' fees and a half. Moreover, the same abbot has the right of assessment of bread and beer, a pillory also, and a cart (*tomborellan*) in the foresaid borough, from time beyond human memory. He has also a market in the same borough, and a fair once a year, but they know not by what authority."

Are we to suppose that the charter of Henry I., granting a market every Friday and a three days' fair at the festival of St. Rumon, had been mislaid in the confusion under John Chubbe?

Then we have the nearly identical presentment of the jurors of the outlying hundred of Tavistock.

\* *Episcopal Registers*, vol. i. p. 39; and OLIVER, p. 380.

† OLIVER, num. iv.

“They say that the site of Tavistock with the outlying hundred belonged at one time to the Lord Adelred, king of England, &c. As they understand, this Adelred gave it with the outlying hundred to Count Ordulph his brother, who, with the king’s leave, established a certain abbey of black monks of St. Benedict, as an absolute and perpetual gift, for the souls of his predecessors the kings of England. The abbot and convent of that place hold of the lord king, in chief, fifteen fees and a half by military service (*de haubergh*, *i.e.* coat of mail). They have also in the manor of Hurdwick, in the same hundred, gallows (*furcas*), from time beyond human memory. But they know not by what service the said Religious hold these fees or how much they are worth a year. The profit, however, of the said hundred is one mark yearly, and the assessment nine pounds yearly, as they think.” Then follow complaints of extortion by the officers of the crown and by the earl of Cornwall.

The loss of prestige and property under John Chubbe, and the growing prosperity of Plympton, Ford, and other Devonshire houses, warned our abbot to look after his possessions as well as his privileges. Therefore, in 1283, Abbot Robert procured from Peter Quivil, who succeeded Walter Bronescombe as bishop of Exeter in 1280, a confirmation\* of diverse churches to the monks of Tavistock. First, Bishop Peter salutes in the Lord all the sons of holy church to whom these words shall come, and says he has read the letter of Bishop Bartholomew granting to Abbot Herbert, a hundred years before (1184), the churches

\* *Episcopal Registers*, vol. i. p. 367.

of Tavistock, Lamerton, Milton, North Petherwyn, Hatherleigh, Abbotsham, and Brent Tor; quoting the very words of the letter given above, bk. ii. chap. 12. Then he adds, "But because the possession of the foresaid Religious, as concerns the church of St. John the Baptist of Hatherleigh, as we have understood, has been with little justice, but for some time, interrupted,—at the prayer of our beloved sons, brother Robert, the abbot of the foresaid monastery and the convent of that place, having duly weighed their pious request for the recovery of the said church, and giving full heed to their claims, with the lawful consent of our chapter of Exeter, we do restore and confirm possession of the said church of Hatherleigh with all its belongings to the foresaid Religious, in view of the divine love, inducting them into the corporal possession of the said church. In proof whereof we have had our seal, and that of our chapter hereunto affixed. Given at Exeter on the 7th of the Ides of January, in the year of our Lord 1283."

Besides these seven churches, our abbot and convent presented to Denbury and Virginstowe in the time of Bishop Bronescombe. Under Bishop Quivil they presented to Milton, Abbotsham, and North Petherwyn. There is no record of their presenting to Tavistock before 1309, under Bishop Stapeldon; and as the church of St. Eustachius was again appropriated to the abbey by Bishop Quivil, most likely no vicar had been appointed up to that date, but the services in the parish church had been done by the monks, under the direction of the abbot. If this robbed the parish of all independence, it probably

secured frequent change of ministers; and this would seem to many persons then, as now, a quite sufficient compensation. In this connection it may be mentioned that in November, 1301, a licence\* was granted by King Edward I. to Ralph de Albemarle to give one acre of land, &c., in Middeltone Aubemarle (Milton Damerel), and the advowson of Westleigh, to Tavistock abbey; and, also, to Walter le Abbe to grant to the same, three acres of land, &c., in Whitchurch, and the advowson of the rectory.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### *ABBOT CAMPPELL AND WILLIAM DE FERRARIIS, &c.*

ROBERT, the last abbot, had been precentor before he was chosen abbot. We know nothing of the antecedents of his successor, Robert Champeaux or Campell; but he was certainly a good man and a good abbot, who did much for the poor, and much for the improvement of the abbey and the town of Tavistock.

During his long tenure of office, 1285 to 1325, here, in England, the legal and political constitution, matured by the genius of Edward I., was settling into permanent form, and demanded for the time careful observance rather than change. One important sign of the settlement of the constitution was the regular meeting of parliament, on its new and more popular basis. To this assembly Tavistock

\* I am indebted for this information to Prebendary Hingston-Randolph, who refers for the fact to Rot. Pat., 29 Ed. i., M. 3.

sent two representatives from the year 1295, and usually these, as our recovered documents show, were actually burgesses living and holding lands or tenements in the parish, or within the borough of Tavistock.

Politics being thus practically settled for the time being, war claimed attention instead; and though it left us a long legacy of bitter hostility, Englishmen, as well as Scots, must always regard with admiration and sympathy Scotland's noble struggle for independence, unsuccessful under Wallace against the genius of Edward I., but brilliantly successful under Robert Bruce, against the feeble and distracted counsels of Edward II.

Abroad, during these fifty years, events were happening full of importance for the future history of Europe. In the East, the Ottoman Empire began, and the Crusades came to a disastrous end in the taking of Acre by the Turks, and the cruel suppression of the Knights Templars by Philip the Fair. The Roman church was fast losing power, through the ambition and failure of Boniface VIII., and the seventy years' exile of the popes at Avignon. Meanwhile, liberty was encouraged by the establishment of the Swiss republic in 1307, and abused, by the quarrels of the Guelphs and Ghibelins, in the Italian cities.

Whilst natural science had awakened new interest through the genius of our own Roger Bacon, who died in 1284, the Franciscans had been honoured, and realism and the freedom of the will defended, by the subtle doctor, Duns Scotus, who died at 43 in the year 1308. The first effort at poetry in the Romance

languages was being made by the great Florentine Dante, who was composing his Divine Comedy in the sadness and bitterness of exile.

To return to our own neighbourhood. In the year 1280,\* Reginald de Ferrariis lord of Ber (Bere) and Isota de Ferrariis lady of Nyweton (Newton Ferrers) granted the abbot and convent of Tavistock and their successors all the land which they held from the gift of Master Adam of Middelton in Cornwood, free from all distraint for homage or service to be made on behalf of Augustine de Batonia, until the legal age of the said Augustine. But the abbot and convent must perform for the grantors the due and accustomed services, which the heirs of the said Master Adam would perform, if he had any.

In the year 1307 William de Ferrariis acknowledges that he and the executors of his father Reginald have received from that religious man Robert (Campell) abbot of Tavistock fifty-seven marks and a half, which the same lord Robert, the abbot, held in his custody for the good of the foresaid Reginald. This is dated at Tavistock on the day of the sabbath (*die Sabbati*) next after the feast of the translation of St. Thomas the Martyr.

This same William de Ferrariis having rebuilt the parish church of Bere, turned it into a collegiate† church. He provided for four priests with an arch-priest over them, and for one deacon, sub-deacon, or clerk at least. These clergy were to perform the daily and nightly offices, and to offer prayers for the

\* DUGDALE, num. xii. and xiii.

† OLIVER, p. 289.

founder and his wife Matilda, for Reginald de Ferrariis and his wife Margery, for Sir Roger de Carminow and his lady Joan, and also for the bishops of Exeter both living and dead.

Bishop Grandisson, with the dean and chapter of Exeter, confirmed this foundation 17th January, 1334, subtracting, however, twenty shillings a year for the chorister boys of the cathedral.

In the next century one third of the lands of the manor of Bere, and, by agreement, the patronage of the church, passed, by female descent, to the Champernouns. Sir Martin de Ferrers left three daughters co-heiresses. In March 1449-50,\* an inquisition, appointed by Bishop Lacy, was held in the parish church, Tavistock, to settle the right of patronage. On May 26th the Commissioners reported that by agreement between Sir Thomas Bonville, husband of the eldest daughter; Alexander Champernoun, husband of the second daughter; and Sir John Cornwaylle, guardian of John Flemmynge, son of the third daughter, the patronage of Bere Ferrers was assigned to the Champernouns. The portraits of William and Matilda de Ferrariis are still preserved in the stained glass of the east window, and copies may be seen in Lysons' *Devonshire*; but the arch-presbytery came to an end and rectors were restored in 1565, when William Willoughby the last arch-priest died. After this, Bere was again a rectory, as it had been before 1334; but it was still charged with the twenty shillings for the cathedral choristers. This payment, by some means reduced to sixteen

\* OLIVER, with further information from Prebendary Hingston-Randolph.



shillings, was only cancelled\* by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in June, 1886.

In 1289† this Reginald with Hugo de Ferrariis and Robert Denys, knights, with John de Belmont, Alan de Lydetone, Henry de Kestelwith, Peter de Donesland, clerk, and others, witness the deed by which Sir Odo le Arcedeakne, knight, granted to the abbot and convent of Tavistock and their successors all his land in Westlydetone (in Milton Abbot) with the services of the free men and the villeins (*rusticorum*). Perhaps this grant was partly due to Abbot Campell's high character. At all events, he turned it to good use; for in 1291 we have another deed in which the abbot assigns all the rents from Westlydetone and from the mill there, to the alms of the abbey. This is to be spent by the almoner (*elemosinarius*) in buying clothes and shoes for Christ's poor, under the supervision of the abbot and prior. This is done for the salvation of himself, his predecessors, and successors, and also for the soul of Sir Odo. The clothes are to be given to the poor yearly in the cloisters, in the presence of the abbot; and the deed ends with calling down the malediction of the Almighty God, of His glorious mother, and of all the saints, upon anyone who shall impenitently infringe upon this gift or divert it to other uses.

\* I am indebted for this information to the present rector of Bere, the Rev. F. T. W. Wintle, who tells me the debt was cancelled under the Act 29 Victoria, c. iii. section 5.

† DUGDALE, num. vi.

## CHAPTER XV.

### *ABBOT CAMPELL AND THE PARISH CHURCH.*

ABBOT CAMPELL had the privilege of rebuilding both the abbey church and the parish church. At least both were completed in his time, the parish church being dedicated by Bishop Stapeldon, May 21st, 1318, and the abbey church, together with two altars in the nave thereof, on August 21st of the same year.

This Walter de Stapeldon, one of the founders of Exeter college, Oxford, was treasurer to Edward II., and shared the fate of that unhappy monarch, being beheaded by the insurgents in London, 1326. He himself carried on the rebuilding of Exeter cathedral, which had been begun by Bishop Quivil, and was to be completed by Bishop Grandisson.

No doubt both our Tavistock churches were mainly in the Decorated style of architecture then in vogue; but, as they were some time in building, the earlier parts were probably of a simpler character, more approaching the Early English style. A fragment of such earlier style has come down to us in the mural arch opposite the Bedford Hotel. Of the parish church built by Abbot Campell we have a similar fragment in the mural arch in the north wall of the nave, and also in the lower portion, at least, of the tower. The parish church was hard by the abbey enclosure. In fact, it lay beside the much larger abbey church, with a strip of graveyard between.

As far as we know, the abbey church retained the

beautiful form which Abbot Campell had given it, until it fell into ruin. The parish church has undergone many changes. It probably superseded a smaller church in the Norman style; for we read of this parish church of St. Eustachius being appropriated to the abbey in 1184.

Out of the many saints of this name and the almost identical Eustathius and Eustasius known to church history, our St. Eustachius is, probably, the soldier-martyr of the reign of Hadrian. As a military tribune, bearing the name of Placidus, he had taken part in the Jewish wars and fought against Josephus before Sepphoris. Eustachius was his Christian name, and was meant to show that he was still a soldier, and a steadfast one, in the army of Christ. His wife and two sons suffered martyrdom with him at Rome, where a great church was dedicated to his memory by Pope Silvester, the friend of Constantine. His day is 20th September; and a hundred\* years ago his festival or wake was kept here on that day.

It is possible,† however, that our church, here in the far west, amongst the Celtic people of Damnonia, was at first dedicated to St. Eustasius, abbot of Luxueil, under the Irish rule of St. Columban; and himself, like his master, a missionary to the still pagan tribes of Germany. But when, under the influence of Rome, Celtic Christianity and Celtic

\* *New British Traveller*, 1784. This, with his usual kindness, was opened to my inspection by D. Radford, Esq., of Mount Tavy.

† This suggestion was made to me by Rev. S. Baring-Gould, known to the world as the distinguished author of *Mehalah*, &c.; to his neighbours, as the parish priest of Lew Trenchard.

sainthood fell into disrepute; a Roman saint, as often happened in similar cases, took the place of the older saint, and the pupil and successor of Columbanus gave way to the Roman Eustachius.

Large churches were needed in those days, even in the midst of small populations, because so much space was set apart for altars to various saints. Thus, from the offerings recorded in our earliest wardens' account, 1385-6, we learn that besides the high altar, the parish church had an altar to St. Mary at the south door, and altars in different parts to St. Eustachius, St. Catherine, St. Stephen, St. Blaise, St. John the Baptist, the Holy Trinity, and St. George; and also one to St. Salvator in a chapel lately founded by John Dabernoun. At the same time, repairs to a large extent were going on, and especially in new glass for the windows.

In 1445 (24 Henry VI.) Constantia Coffin, relict of John Wyse, with Robert Bonefas and Maurice Berd, Esquires, erected the aisle or guild of St. Thomas the Martyr within the parish church of Tavistock. This was probably the origin of the second south aisle. It is known now as the clothworkers' aisle, and in it the capitals of the pillars and the bosses in the roof are much richer than in other parts of the church. Most likely the church had been lately again rebuilt, wholly or in part, when this addition was made to it. For the east and tower windows are in the best Perpendicular style, which prevailed in the reign of Henry VI.; and when Leland paid his visit, about 1540, the church seemed to have been only lately built. He fancied there had been no parish church until this one was built, and that in

earlier times the townsfolk had worshipped in the abbey church. The fragment of the rood screen, discovered in 1844, was good Perpendicular; as is also the portion of the same given in Kempe's *Notices*. This represents some of the grades of the celestial hierarchy, and, as Mr. Kempe observes, "Potestas" is clothed in the armour of the time of Henry VI. The side windows, both north and south, are later insertions.

Like other beautiful parish churches, that of Tavistock was dreadfully disfigured during the last century. Whitewash covered the pillars. The tower arch and window were blocked with a deep gallery. The body of the church was filled with pews of all heights and sizes; and a mighty pulpit flanked with desks for parson and clerk stood right across the chancel archway. Remembering all this, we ought to be very thankful for the restoration of 1845. We may regret the removal of memorial slabs from the aisles; and of the plastering, with its remnants of mediæval drawing, from the walls. The seats too might be more comfortable. But at least they are orderly and uniform; and their carved ends, the result of a careful study of neighbouring churches, as well as the wood carving of the beautiful organ screen, will be more admired as the years roll on.

There are few parish churches that have finer views than that looking westward from the communion rails, or that looking across towards the north-east from the south door. If it is not perfect, and, like most things on earth, leaves something to be desired, at all events we may be thankful that our parish church has not been remodelled to suit the

capricious tastes of some (mismamed) restorers of churches.

It is interesting, as an illustration of the changes we have passed through, to compare the "treasures" of our church at different periods. In 1385-6\* there were one cup and cover of silver, with two gilt angels holding a glass receptacle wherein the body of our Lord is borne; four silver chalices and patens; two silver cruets and one silver pix for the body of Christ, the pix being a box in which the consecrated wafers were kept. By 1470-1\* had been added to these one beryl set in silver, with a chain of silver to hang it to the pix on the principal feasts; one cross of silver gilt, with the figures of St. Mary the Virgin and St. John the Evangelist belonging to it; one box containing some hair of St. Mary the Virgin and of St. Mary Magdalene; another cup of silver, and a little cross, the legacy of John the hermit. In 1561-2,\* besides a considerable array of vestments and a great cloth to set before the rood, the actual treasures of the church are only—one chalice gilded and another partly gilded; a case to carry the chalices in; a coffer to hold the evidence, *i.e.*, deeds and muniments of all sorts; and a corpus with a veil to it, if "nackyn" means a veil. Already reduced so far under Edward VI., the treasures of the church would seem to have been still further despoiled until nothing valuable was left; for at present, we have nothing earlier than a silver-gilt chalice, given in 1623. This is of the pattern that came into use after the order of 1562, requiring chalices to be made with larger bowls and

\* See *Calendar of the Tavistock Parish Records*, by R. N. WORTH; 1887.

a cover to match. Besides these, we have a second cover dated 1634, and a second chalice, 1684, of the same make as the first; also four large pewter flagons dating from 1633 to 1638, and a pewter dish, or paten, of the same time; with one smaller pewter flagon, which has been recently silver-plated for use at the chapel-of-ease at Fitzford. We have also the silver paten, presented by Dawbeny Williams in 1684, already mentioned in book i., chapter 3. John duke of Bedford gave a silver flagon, thirteen inches in height, on the coronation-day of George III.; and a silver alms dish was presented by Mr. William Lethbridge, 1877. When the chapel-of-ease, or so-called New Church, was opened in 1867, a handsome silver chalice and paten were presented by William Duke of Bedford. We should also count amongst our treasures that rare book Larkham *On the Attributes*, given by Mr. Greenfield; and also the early documents, and the three volumes of minutes of vestries reaching from 1655 to 1830, all lately recovered. Nor must we forget our handsome lectern, presented by the late Duke of Bedford, nor our stained windows, put up indeed as signs of personal bereavement, but serving to adorn the church, more or less according to taste, with the work of Ward and Hughes, William Morris, Meyer of Munich, Wales of Newcastle, Dixon of London, and Clayton and Bell. The last addition to our treasures is the beautiful adaptation of Max's Christ the Healer to the marble of the Bredall monument by Harry Hems of Exeter.



CHAPTER XVI.

*ABBOT CAMPELL AND THE ABBEY BUILDINGS.*

SPEAKING of Robert Campell, Oliver in his *Monasticon* says, "During his government several parts of the abbey were rebuilt, but particularly the conventual church of S. Mary and S. Rumon, which is said to have been 126 paces long, exclusive of the lady chapel." In a footnote of the same, speaking of the arch in the churchyard, he says, "This small vestige of the earlier buildings of the abbey is all that remains to apprise us that a stately edifice in the prevalent style of the thirteenth century, little inferior in size to Wells or Exeter Cathedral, once stood on this spot."

As there is no record of this church being rebuilt or considerably altered, we may presume that the church consecrated by Bishop Stapeldon in August, 1318, was the same grand building which is described by William of Worcester in the notes of his journey from Bristol to S. Michael's Mount in 1478. In these he says, "The length of the church of the monastery of Tavistock contains, besides the chapel of the blessed Mary, 126 steps (steppys); and its breadth contains, with the 14 steps of the breadth of the nave of the church, 21 steps. The length of the nave contains 60 steps. The length of the choir 42 steps; the length of the lady chapel, with the retro-choir (*capellæ cum transitu*), about 36 steps."

To make this statement agree with itself, we must suppose that the retro-choir was 24 steps long and

the lady chapel 12 steps. With ordinary walking, 126 paces, or about 110 yards, will take one from the pavement in Bedford Place, over against Betsy Grimbal's tower, to a point somewhat beyond the middle of the road between the south-east corner of the churchyard and the library. Here then the choir ended, and the retro-choir began.

Just on this spot, when excavations were being made about the year 1850, and again in 1889, tiles were dug up, as well as fragments of a monument. Specimens of both can be seen in the library. Some of the tiles represent an abbot in the act of blessing, others a fish or a lion, or a lion with fish surrounding it. Mr. A. J. Kempe in his *Notices* (1830) suggests that the lion was to mark the abbey's indebtedness to the earldom of Cornwall, and the fish its connection with the isles of Scilly. It is just possible, though not likely, that the fish was a revival of the early Christian symbol, the Greek word for fish giving the initials of "Jesus Christ God's Son (the) Saviour." It is more likely that the lion represented royalty, our abbey being a royal foundation from the charter of Ethelred II. The fragments of carved stone, which still retain some of their original colour and gilding, and are in the first and best style of Perpendicular, are very probably parts of the shrine of S. Rumon; for when William of Worcester was here in 1478, he found "S. Rumon, an Irish bishop, lying in a shrine in the abbey church, *between the choir and the lady chapel*"; that is, in the retro-choir, which, according to fair measurement, must have stood close by where these excavations were made.

The abbey church was standing, though in ruins,

until 1670, when it was rased to the ground, and the materials were used to build a school-house on the site of the tower. This school-house, and therefore the tower, stood at the south-west corner of the church-yard. It was last occupied by the Rev. R. Sleeman, schoolmaster and curate from 1771 to 1796, and then vicar till his death in 1812. Probably of nearly the same date as the abbey church were the cloisters and the octagonal or circular chapter-house, with its "thirty-six\* seats wrought out in the walls, all arched overhead with curious hewn and carved stone."

Browne Willis, speaking of the remains of the abbey yet standing in his time (1718), says, "The gate-house is, as I remember, made a prison (the clink). The refectory is let out for a meeting-house. The Saxon school and other offices are employed to hold corn, hay, &c. The walls of the kitchen and chapter-house are all standing, only uncovered at top. The site of the cloister is visible, and measures about 55 paces in length. The east side opened into the † chapter-house."

Willis also found a statue, said to be of Ordulf, under an arch on the north side of the cloisters. Mr. Kempe identifies this with the arch opposite the "Bedford," where the Rev. E. A. Bray lies buried. He may be correct; but there is scarcely room between this and the south wall of the parish church for the breadth of the abbey church.

\* PRINCE, in BRAY'S *Borders of the Tamar and Tavy*, vol. i. p. 435, and OLIVER, p. 91, note from LELAND.

† For further particulars as to the arrangement of the abbey buildings see the chapter on Abbot Cullyng, in book iv.; and for the general plan of Benedictine houses see *Encyclopædia Britannica*, under "Abbey," and especially the drawing of the ground-plan of Fountains Abbey.

In Dugdale we read, "In the only arch of the cloisters which remained in Mr. Gough's time (about 1780) two large bones were shown, pretended to be Ordgar's, or rather Ordulf's, whose figure was there in 1718." Gough, in his additions to Camden (1789) says that the chapter-house and Saxon school were pulled down in 1736, to build a house for the Duke of Bedford's steward. This steward was the Mr. Saunders, of whose "barbarities" Mr. Bray makes such complaint in his wife's twenty-fifth letter to Southey. It was when the excavations were being made for this abbey-house that the ancient sarcophagus was found, which now stands under Betsy Grimbal's tower. In it were the three ancient bones still preserved under a glass case in the church. If tradition is to be trusted, these are thigh bones of Ordulf, the gigantic founder of the abbey, and of his wife and his father Ordgar; that is, they are about nine hundred years old. A few fragments of Campell's fine church are still to be seen in the vicarage gardens and in other parts of the town. Of the abbey buildings, the chief portions still existing are the gateway into the town, over which is the public library; the beautiful porch\* in the Bedford yard annexed to the abbey chapel, which was probably the abbot's hall, not the refectory, for that was on the site of the old ball-room; the gateway, now called Betsy Grimbal's tower, which must have led from the abbey precincts to the garden, orchard, and stew-

\* An engraving of the ruins of the abbey, about 1760, in Buck's *Views of Devon*, represents this porch as quite detached, suggesting that the present abbey chapel is an extension of the building to the right of the picture.

ponds; and the still-house, at the south-west corner of the precincts by the abbey bowling-green, with a door that used to open upon the broad battlemented wall against the river. This still-house was most kindly restored by the late Duke of Bedford in 1884, at the suggestion of the present vicar, and is now used as a small museum and a summer study. Very likely the infirmary used to stand not far from the still-house, forming, with the buttery and the kitchen, a continuous line of buildings within the western wall of the precincts.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### *ABBOT CAMPELL AND WHITCHURCH CHANTRY.*

OUR nearest parish, Whitchurch, first comes under our notice in connection with Abbot Campell. The parish may owe its name to the Saxon St. White, as several churches and districts in Somerset and Dorset certainly do. This St. White\* has been often mistaken for St. Vitus of Sicily. He was one of the companions and fellow-labourers of St. Boniface, the great apostle of Germany, and was consecrated, by that saint, bishop of Buraburg, now Paderborn, about 742. The glory of St. White was reflected on his native land. Churches were dedicated to his memory alike in England and Germany; and, whilst an annual festival is still kept to his honour at Echtarnach, in Bavaria, he is also commemorated every Whit-tide, in a horse and cattle fair on Whitedown, near Crewkerne. There was an old

\* T. KERSLAKE'S *St. Richard the King*, pp. 68-73.

tradition, ridiculed by our reformers Tyndale and Hooper, that St. White must have a cheese every year. Mr. T. Kerslake, in his *St. Richard the King*, suggests that this may be due to St. White's bishopric having to contribute a great cheese every year to the monastery founded by St. Boniface at Fulda.

To turn to our own parish of Whitchurch, it is no objection to the church being originally dedicated to St. White, that it is now, and has been for more than five hundred years, dedicated to St. Andrew. With the Norman conquest, and the increase of the influence of Rome, many of our local saints, whether Celtic or English, were forgotten, and their places filled with others more widely illustrious.

As to the connection between Whitchurch and our abbey, there is a long and elaborate Latin deed, given in Oliver's\* *Monasticon* from Bishop Stapeldon's Register, telling how the bishop, at the request of Abbot Campell, turned the rectory of Whitchurch into a chantry, to be served by an arch-priest and three fellows (*socii*), with whom he was to live in common. The object was the maintenance of more frequent services, and especially of daily prayers and masses for the living and the dead. Amongst those to be prayed for, our abbot, Robert Campell, is to take the first place, dead or living, before royal majesty, pontifical dignity, or lordly distinction; and this because he had greatly enlarged the property of his abbey, and had lately, by his labours, secured the advowson of Whitchurch, so that provision for this chantry might be made there; for the first place of honour should

\* Num. viii. p. 98.

reward the tedium of labour. Next in order, the king, the able but worthless Edward II., is to be prayed for; "that most excellent prince our lord Edward;" "the illustrious lady Isabel our queen." After these, prayers were to be offered for the health of the bishop, and the dean and chapter of Exeter, and of Sir Hugh de Courtenay and Sir Richard de Stapeldon, knights. Prayers were also to be made for the souls of William and Ysota, the parents of Abbot Robert; for Lord Ordulph and Abina his countess, Edwin\* of good memory (the brother of Edmund Ironsides), and Livingus, "founders of the said abbey of Tavistock"; also for Robert of Old Land (*de veteri terra*), Adam of Middeltone, John of Aisleghe, and all the faithful living and dead.

Our forefathers of five hundred years ago may have been ignorant and superstitious; but, at least, they had a faith in the unseen, and a trust in the efficacy of prayer that might put many of us to shame. There is something touching in the simple child-like faith that would reward a man for founding a chantry by putting his name first on the list of those to be prayed for. Bishop Stapeldon arranged that all these good souls should be prayed for at Whitchurch for ever (*perpetuo*). How many of those who now worship in the bright little church there have ever even heard their names?

On the death, or retirement, of the present rector, the office of arch-presbyter is to be established for ever. A fit person for the office, and three fit presbyters to help him, are to be presented to the bishop by the abbot and convent of the monastery

\* See book i, chap. 5.



of Tavistock. Lest there should be any break in the divine obsequies and suffrages, on every vacancy the presentation shall be made within a month, and, in case of neglect, the appointment lies directly with the bishop.

The arch-presbyter is to have the care and the rule of the church and of all the parish, and to be over the other three presbyters. For their maintenance they are to be put into possession of all the rents and produce of the church; but so that the arch-presbyter shares board and lodging with his fellows. He is to supply them yearly, between Michaelmas and All Saints, with twenty shillings sterling, and with clothing of two garments, of one cut, and that the same as his own for that year. Moreover, for other necessaries he is to divide between them, every quarter-day, two marks sterling, that is, £1 6s. 8d. Careful provision is made for securing the property of the church and especially the fruits of the harvest, in case of the untimely death of the arch-presbyter. As the dispenser of their goods, and otherwise set over them, the arch-presbyter is to have the first place amongst them, by the rule that he should take the lead, who, in the same sort of warfare, by longer labour has come to the front.

The three assistant presbyters or priests (*presbiteri seu sacerdotes*) must be faithful in the cure of souls, and careful fellow-workers in administering the sacraments to the parishioners. Personal residence is required; and, if any of these orders are neglected, and the arch-presbyter or his fellows, being summoned before the bishop or the abbot, should not appear for three days, without further warning they are to

lose all their rights in the property of the church. This property, during any vacancy, is to belong to the bishop of Exeter, according to the custom of the diocese.

The staff of presbyters is to be assisted by a clerk filling one of the lower grades of the ministry, and a bearer of the holy water.

All this is done with the counsel and unanimous consent of the dean and chapter of Exeter, in the presence of Roger de Churleton, archdeacon of Totnes, and of the proctor of Sir James Franceis, the rector of Whitchurch. It is undertaken at the pressing entreaty of those truly religious men brother Robert de Campellis and his convent; and it is dated at Exeter 14th January, A.D. 1321-2. Very likely the old tower at Tiddybrook is a part of the building occupied by the archpriest and his assistants, and should therefore be called the *Chantry*, not, as it is, the *Priory*. Whitchurch passed rapidly at this time through many changes. In 1304, though the thrifty Robert Campell had been abbot for nineteen years, the means of the abbey were unequal to the claims of hospitality, it having been robbed, by certain "magnates," of possessions to the value of a thousand marks yearly, which belonged to it before the Conquest. To meet the difficulty, Bishop Thomas Bytton, at the request of the abbot, with the consent of the dean and chapter, appropriated\* to the abbey the income of the church of Burrington, in North Devon, which was rich, in the place of Whitchurch, which was poor. The rector of Burrington, "master William de Tavystoke," was present, and agreed that

\* *Episcopal Registers*, vol. i. p. 405.

the appropriation might take place when he died or retired. Thereupon Burrington, which till then was a rectory, became a vicarage; whilst Whitchurch, which had been so nearly reduced to a vicarage, became a chantry, as we have seen, in 1321. It could not have remained a chantry long; for at the close of the century it was a simple vicarage. May 25th, 1398, on the death of Henry Smyth, John Raddyeh was instituted vicar of Whitchurch; the patron being King Richard II., who then held the temporalities of the abbey.

Before leaving Whitchurch, we must notice that Richard Mewy (Meavy) and Matilda his wife obtained licence from Bishop Stafford in 1401, and again from Bishop Lacy in 1421, for the holding divine service in the oratory, or chapel, of St. John the Baptist in their mansion of Walreddon (Walradan). The site of the chapel is still shown amongst the many interesting relics of this fine old place; and some secret chambers and staircases have been lately discovered by the present occupier, the Rev. H. D. Nicholson.

## Book IV.

### CHAPTER I.

*ABBOT ROBERT BONUS, A GENERAL SURVEY,  
EDWARD II.'S GIFTS TO THE ABBEY, AND THE  
GUILD OF THE LIGHT OF ST. MARY.*

ROBERT BONUS, or Bosse, as Dugdale calls him, had been abbot of La Reole, in the diocese of Tarbes. He would seem to have been restless and ambitious, but he secured the patronage of the pope, John XXII., and of several of the cardinals, and it was on their recommendation that he was inducted to our abbey of Tavistock by Bishop Grandisson, June 12th, 1328. He had received letters of protection as abbot more than two years before, on Campell's death. He proved himself intemperate and unreasonable, so that, after "extraordinary forbearance," as Oliver puts it, the bishop deposed him on 23rd October, 1333.\*

It is sad to think of Abbot Campell's good work for the church and the town, and the neighbouring parishes, so soon marred, as it must have been, by his successor's misconduct. Let us seek diversion in turning to a general survey of events at home and

\* Prebendary Hingeston-Randolph tells me there is much interesting information about Abbot Bonus in Grandisson's Register. Amongst other things, the bishop plays upon his name, and says, he should have been called Bad (*Malus*), not Good (*Bonus*). See Appendix C for further details.

abroad from the year 1285, when Abbot Campell began his long rule of forty years, a period of office here in Tavistock only surpassed by the 45 years of Vicar Bray (1812 to 1857).

Abroad, the ambitious schemes of Boniface VIII. were thwarted by the unscrupulous violence of the French king, Philip the Fair, and were followed by the seventy years' captivity of the popes at Avignon. The sturdy burgesses of the cities of Flanders held their own against this same Philip the Fair, in the tremendous overthrow of the French chivalry at Courtrai in 1302; and the Swiss Cantons, five years later, secured their independence against King Albert of Germany, the first Hapsburg who was also duke of Austria. In France, Philip was making rapid strides in annexing the lands of his neighbours, and in robbing his own people of their rights and liberties. In Italy, the renaissance of the thirteenth century culminated in Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

At home, the barons retained the power secured for them by de Montfort. Even the energy and ability of Edward I. could not wrest it from them; and in Edward II.'s reign, under the king's cousin, the duke of Lancaster, and the Lords Ordainers, they drove out the king's minion Gaveston, and, for a time, kept all power in their own hands. The struggle which lasted with varying fortune all through the twenty years' reign of Edward II., was but a poor and selfish copy of that under de Montfort. But Marlowe made it the subject of our first great historical drama (1589), in which the closing scenes of Edward's unhappy life are even more pathetic than those of Shakespeare's *Richard II.*; and Michael

Drayton, in 1596, tried to turn it into a sort of national epic in his *Mortimeriados; or, Barons' Wars*.

As usual, there were many parallels between events at home and abroad. Philip's cruel suppression of the Knights Templars had its parallel in the banishment of the Jews by Edward I. Contrary to the king's intention they were driven out with untold sufferings, not to return until the time of Cromwell. So that five hundred years ago we were treating the Jews, here in England, much as the Russians would like to treat them now.

The successful struggles of the Swiss and the Flemish against their foreign masters had its parallel in Scotland's desperate efforts for national independence, which were crowned with victory at Bannockburn in 1314.

Meanwhile, under Edward I.'s firm rule, trade had enormously increased, agriculture also flourished, and many serfs became tenant farmers as copyholders. The towns made even more rapid progress than the country during these forty years. Steadily they secured rights of self-government and of self-taxation. The civic power, at first confined to the freeholders, was extended to the merchants, and at last to the craftsmen. Charters were granted to every trade, and each was distinguished by its own livery. Thus local government had passed from the few to the many; and (as Green says in his *History of the English People*, p. 195), under Edward III. "the government of our towns had become more really popular than it ever again became till the Municipal Reform Act of our own day."

Under Edward I. the laws were systematised, and

those still binding upon us date from his reign. In fact, in many respects, with Edward's accession we enter upon the history of modern England. Another link to the present is the regular meetings of parliament, and of a parliament in which the Commons take their part as a matter of course. It is true that, for some time, the Commons were content to state grievances and grant supplies, leaving active legislation to the Lords. But in 1321, owing perhaps to a suspicion that the barons were looking too exclusively after their own interests, it was enacted that all laws must be established by the king in parliament "with the consent of the prelates, earls, barons, and universality of the realm." Liberty seemed to be permanently established when, in 1332, the knights of the shire threw in their lot with the burgesses of the towns and formed the House of Commons; for thus was secured that union of the landed and trading interests which has given to our political constitution a power of endurance and development unknown in other countries. The influence of parliament was made strikingly evident a little later, when, towards the end of Edward III.'s reign, the "Good Parliament" impeached and removed members of the king's council.

Though not a wise king, Edward II. was a benefactor\* of our abbey, probably for benefits received in the gift or loan of money to meet his urgent necessities. In 1318 he granted to the abbot and monks a market, a fair, and view of frankpledge in their manor of Devenebury. This is Denbury near Newton Abbot, celebrated for its ancient

\* DUGDALE, p. 490.



camp. An annual fair is still held there in September. In the same year, 1318, the king in return for £300, which he had borrowed, granted to the abbey for three years the profits of his mine at Birlond in Devon; and afterwards he secured the repayment of another £100 on the Devonshire mines generally. In the year 1325 he granted to the abbot and convent the custody of the stannaries\* in Devon, and also of the water of Dartmouth for seven years (probably tolls upon the ships that put in there), for the annual payment of £113 6s. 8d. Under Edward III. the stannaries of Devon and Cornwall, that is, the over-sights and prerogatives connected with the tin mines in those counties, were conferred in perpetuity on the duchy of Cornwall.

These stannary and other rights were granted to the convent during the life of good abbot Campell. The parish records, fortunately recovered in 1886, and, by the generosity of the late Duke of Bedford, edited in 1887 by that able antiquary, Mr. R. N. Worth, the historian of Plymouth, reveal to us a bit of quiet life in Tavistock in the same year, 1325. A guild or confraternity, both of men and women, had been formed for maintaining the light of the Virgin Mary in the parish church, and, let us hope, for maintaining conduct fitted for such a sacred association. Perhaps the Guild may have owed its existence to the example and advice of the worthy abbot. It possessed property and needed it, for candles were then a very considerable item of church expense. So much so that our careful Bishop Grandisson when

\* The stannaries mean strictly the tin mines of Devon and Cornwall, which, by a very early usage, belonged to the Crown.

laying\* down rules for his college at Ottery, directs that, for the purchase of wax for the church lights, the sacristan and stewards shall watch the fairs of Winchester, Great Torrington, and Barnstaple. They shall also have the wax candles in store within a fortnight after Michaelmas, because the "older they are the longer they last." In our deed of 1325 Walter Cullyng, Roger Stacey, William Soleman (Sleeman), Robert the Salter, and John Populston, brethren and guardians of the light of St. Mary in the parish church of Tavistock, with the other brothers and sisters of the said brotherhood, make it known to all the faithful in Christ, that they have granted to Reginald de Eggecombe, clerk, a house in Tavistock with the garden adjacent, lying between the house that used to belong to Walter Hogheden and the garden of John Populston, to be held of the lords in chief of the fee at the customary rent and services, and of the brotherhood, for the annual payment of sixteen pence a year in half-yearly instalments at Easter and Michaelmas. The witnesses are Robert David, Thomas Cullyng, John Magha, John Sechevill, Robert Vyna, clerk, and others.

\* OLIVER'S *Monasticon*, p. 261.

CHAPTER II.

*JOHN DE COURTENAY, THE HUNTING ABBOT.*

THE first European renaissance, which appeared in Italy in the thirteenth century, had spread to England in the fourteenth. The unity of race and language, thoroughly recovered at last, made this possible. This renaissance showed itself in the outburst of a great and truly national literature; in the glory and chivalry of our arms; and, on its less pleasing side, in a tendency to religious indifference and to luxurious living.

By the middle of the fourteenth century, English had become the language of the court. In 1362, it was ordered by statute that pleadings should be in English, not in French; and by 1385, in many grammar-schools, translation from the Latin might be made into English instead of French. Modern English prose was prepared to make its first great effort in Wicklif's Bible (1382); and modern English poetry in the dramatic pictures of our first great poet, Geoffrey Chaucer. In early life, an embassy to Italy had lifted Chaucer above the idle unreality of the French romances, by introducing him to the new and vigorous native literature of the Italians. But he retained the bright wit of the French, whilst rejecting their cumbrous fancies; and he mellowed the coarseness of Boccacio with his high-toned English seriousness.

With a native literature of the first order, our re-united England had shown what its knights and

yeomen could do in arms on the fields of Crecy and Poitiers. The glitter and the sentiment of chivalry were found in the courts of the warrior king and his heroic son, and in the Order of the Garter.

The religious indifference of the time may be seen in John de Courtenay, who was abbot of Tavistock from 1334 to 1349; and its large aims in his magnificent cousin, John de Grandisson, who was Bishop of Exeter from 1327 to 1369.

John de Courtenay was the\* eldest son of Hugh de Courtenay, fifth baron Courtenay, of Okehampton. His grandfather, Robert de Courtenay, had married the daughter and heiress of the last Redvers earl of Devon, whose family had held the earldom from its first bestowal by Henry I. Though he was the eldest son, John de Courtenay chose the monastic life, leaving the hereditary honours and duties to his second brother Hugh, who was declared to be earl of Devon, in 1335,† as heir to Isabel de Redvers. His son, another Hugh, married Margaret de Bohun, a granddaughter of Edward I.; and their eldest son fought at Crecy, and was one of the original knights of the Garter. The title has been re-claimed by the Courtenays of our own time, after being allowed to lie dormant from 1566 to 1831.

John de Courtenay was ordained sub-deacon in the conventual church of Totnes on the 22nd December, 1313, and deacon in the collegiate church of Crediton in the following March, by Bishop Stapeldon, in whose register he is described as Brother John de Cortenay, monk of Tavistock. He was preferred

\* OLIVER, p. 91 and 155; also *Additional Supplement*, p. 13.

† OLIVER, p. 155. His father had died in 1291.

by the pope, John XXII., to the priory of Lewes, and was actually elected and installed; but the opposition of the patron, the powerful John de Warren, earl of Surrey, compelled him to retire, and he had to come back to our cloisters as a simple monk, until he was appointed abbot in 1334. In 1329, soon after his installation at Lewes, he received an encouraging letter from Bishop Grandisson. This great prelate was splendidly connected. He was descended from the Dukes of Burgundy, and his father was cousin of the Eastern Emperor (Palæologus), of the Duke of Bavaria, and of the King of Hungary. He was learned, devout, and discreet, and he had been a favourite nuncio of Pope John XXII. at the chief courts of Europe. Edward III. made him archdeacon of Nottingham, and, at the pope's urgent request, bishop of Exeter; and he afterwards employed him as his ambassador in a delicate business with Pope Clement VI. In his large aims and splendid generosity, Grandisson proved himself worthy of his noble descent. He built and furnished a home for his successors at Bishopsteignton, that "they might have a place where to lay their head, if perchance their temporalities should fall into the hands of the king," a striking hint of the growing jealousy of the state towards the church, and of the possible disendowment that might come out of it. The bishop helped to restore many churches, amongst them the beautiful parish church of Ottery St. Mary, which he almost rebuilt, turning it into a collegiate church, and endowing it with the manor. He had purchased the manor in 1335 from the chapter of Rouen, to whom

it had been granted by Edward the Confessor. He showed his liberal spirit by turning the serfs into copyholders, with a rent of half-a-crown for ten acres (a ferling), instead of the customary burdens and services. But especially he completed, in the beautiful Decorated style of the latter half of the fourteenth century, our cathedral at Exeter, which had been a hundred years in building. As he entered upon the work, Grandisson said that when it was finished it would surpass in beauty all churches of its kind in England and France. On this Professor Freeman, (in the *History of Exeter*, p. 187), says, "The prediction was safely risked. As far as outline and general effect goes, the church of Exeter forms a class by itself, and can be compared with nothing save its own miniature at Ottery. As far as detail goes, no building of his age shows us the taste of that age in greater perfection."

With all his lavish expenditure, this "grave, wise, and politic" bishop was so careful, that when he died in 1369, after his long episcopate of forty-two years, he left handsome bequests to the pope, the emperor, the king, the queen, and to sundry persons of note, as well as to bishops, churches, and colleges.

When Grandisson wrote his letter to John de Courtenay in 1329, he certainly had no fear that his cousin, who had sacrificed such worldly honour for the blessings of devotion, would turn out a careless spendthrift. This is the letter, written in all cousinly kindness and with much worldly wisdom, as it has been preserved for us in Grandisson's register.\*

\* OLIVER, *Additional Supplement*, p. 13.

“To the venerable and religious man, brother John de Courtenay, prior of Lewes, our cousin, John, by the divine mercy bishop of Exeter, prosperity and the triumph of virtue against impugners. Your letter, brought to us by your messenger, John Hunte, has shown that you have already received (thanks to the Most High!) the letter apostolic providing you with the said priory. We have felt the greater exultation of spirit at this, as we are striving the more earnestly for your well deserved promotion; and often, as you know, we have written from our very heart to our lord the vice-chancellor for your swift and happy success. For the removal of the opposition which you fear from the lord earl Warren, we intend to press the matter strongly before the lord your father, as you suggest; and even before the earl himself, if it should seem well, time and place being convenient. Nevertheless we consider it highly expedient that, with all possible speed, you should arrange for an interview between the lord your father, us, and others your well-wishers; so that by the common counsel and importunity of friends, and the powerful aid of your presence, the benefit of peace and quietness may be secured between you and your opponents. In the foregoing and in other things that fall in with your wishes, you may turn to us with confidence. May the Most High restore you to your right, and strengthen and keep you in bodily health.

“Given in our manor of Peyngtone the 17<sup>th</sup> day of September, in the second year of our consecration (1329).”

Besides this mark of friendship, Courtenay was indebted to his cousin, the bishop, for his appointment



as abbot. The election was a compromise, as we are told in Grandisson's\* register.

In the absence of the prior, the monks were assembled under the sub-prior to choose one of their own body as their abbot; but, not being able to come to a decision, they all agreed to refer the matter to the bishop, and abide by his choice. The letter which preserves these details for us tells us how seriously Grandisson undertook the charge, and his commendation of Courtenay shows how firmly he believed in his fitness for the post. Addressing Courtenay, he says, "After careful deliberation with ourselves and others, turning the eyes of our mind towards you, whom noble birth, good manners, and virtuous life, mature wisdom, and the endowment of other virtues abundantly plead for, we have appointed you abbot of the said monastery; committing to you, in the Lord, the care and rule of the souls there, and the management of the spiritual and temporal endowments; in full confidence that the same monastery, by your watchful care and diligent circumspection, will recover from the failure of its resources which, alas! it now endures, and will be preserved from injuries and adversities."

Was Grandisson quite mistaken in the character of his cousin? or did John de Courtenay's early zeal give way before the prevailing worldly spirit of the time? This last is an experience not quite unknown amongst ourselves, nor indeed in any period of the church's history. Certainly, as abbot of Tavistock, from 1334 to 1349, Courtenay showed himself neither a devout Christian, nor an honest administrator. He

\* OLIVER, p. 98.

alienated the property of the abbey, and allowed its buildings and its discipline to decay together; whilst, like the jolly monk of Chaucer's *Prologue*, he devoted himself to the pleasures of the chase. It must have been a sad disappointment to the good bishop to receive complaints that, under the management of his hopeful cousin, "the monastery, that used to abound in riches and honour, was oppressed with a debt of fifteen hundred pounds," equivalent at least to twenty thousand now; and that discipline was so neglected that often only two would be present at the regular meals in the refectory, whilst the monks were feasting in their own chambers. Doubtless Grandisson was as lenient as he could be—old friendship and family influence pleading strongly in Courtenay's favour. Yet in 1338 our hunting abbot was suspended for neglecting repairs. He was pardoned on submission; but in 1348 his case was brought again before the bishop. This time he was charged with mortgaging, selling, and giving away the possessions of the monastery. Again he was forgiven, "out of respect for his family, and the very powerful earl of Devon, his brother." This record touches the real ground of offence and the secret of Abbot Courtenay's waste and mismanagement; for it ends with the statement, "*The bishop forbad him to keep hounds; eidem vero inhibuit ne canes venaticos aleret.*"

Surely Dan Chaucer had our abbot, or such another, in view when he described the worthy monk who hunted on principle; who held "not worth an oyster" the notion that "hunters be not holy men," and that a monk should not be seen "out of his

cloister"; and who wondered how the world would be served if monks were always poring over their books till they were wood; *i.e.* mazed. These four last lines of Chaucer's picture we may take to be a fair portrait of our hunting abbot:

"Therefore he was a *prickasour*\* a right;  
 Greyhounds he had as swift as fowl of flight.  
 Of *pricking*† and of hunting for the hare  
 Was all his lust; for no cost would he spare."

Another contemporary abbot, William de Clowne of Leicester,‡ was so famous a hunter that King Edward, his son the Black Prince, and several noblemen, paid him an annual pension for the privilege of hunting with him. The princely favour shown to our own hunting parson, Jack Russell, shows that in some respects English, or at least Devonshire, tastes and habits have scarcely changed in five hundred years.

In Bishop Grandisson's register§ we have the order for Courtenay's induction, which may be taken as an example of the induction of our abbots generally. It is one amongst many other signs of a revival of old usage in our own time, that in recent years the archdeacon of Totnes has inducted incumbents into the livings within his archdeaconry with somewhat similar formalities. This mandate orders the archdeacon of Totnes "to induct the aforesaid abbot into corporal possession of the aforesaid monastery by assigning to him a stall in the choir, and a place in

\* Hard-rider.

† Hard-riding.

‡ John SAUNDERS' *Cabinet Pictures from Chaucer*, p. 106.

§ OLIVER, num. vii. p. 98.

the chapter of the same monastery, with the full authority of an abbot."

In the same register we have also a sample of the episcopal blessing in the benediction of Courtenay by Grandisson, April 24, 1334. "On this day the lord bishop blessed brother John de Courtenay, who made his profession in this form: 'I, John, elected and confirmed abbot of the monastery of Tavistock, of the Rule of St. Benedict, profess canonical obedience and subjection in all things to the holy church of Exeter, and to thee, reverend father, the lord John, by God's grace bishop of the same church, and to thy successors canonically appointed thereto.'"

Having read this profession, and signed it with his own hand, Courtenay gave it to Hugh de Bysshopstone, the notary.

### CHAPTER III.

#### *RICHARD DE ESSE, JOHN D'ABERNON, AND PROVISION FOR THE VICAR.*

RICHARD DE ESSE, or Ashe, succeeded John de Courtenay in 1349, the year of the Black Death. Whether this terrible pestilence visited Tavistock or not we do not know. Abbot Richard was too ill to go to court to do fealty for his temporalities; but he survived until 1362; and Tavistock should have been one of those fortunate monasteries which we are told escaped the general scourge, being blessed with a good supply of fresh water. So early were the laws of health suggesting themselves to men, who would take centuries yet to understand and apply them.

Newenham\* was less fortunate, and lost twenty-three of its brethren during the visitation, and eighty-eight secular persons living in the abbey.

Two interesting documents have come to us from the time of Abbot Richard. The first is given in Dugdale's *Monasticon*, num. xvii.; the second in Oliver's, num. ix. In 1353 John d'Abernon, of Bradford, gave to God, and to Richard, abbot of the monastery of St. Rumon of Tavistock, and to the monks serving God there, his whole manor of Wyke (Week), near Brent Tor, with the buildings, dovecote, mill, lands, meadows, wood, rights of common and pasture, and supply of fire-wood, together with the rents and services due from all the tenants, freemen as well as villeins (*villani*); and the rent of Lawrence of Holywille, with the reversion of the lands which he holds there. The witnesses are John de Ferrers, Walter Wodland, and John de Relly, knights; Roger Pyperel, Richard Mewy, and others; and the deed is signed at Week on the 28th of May, in the year of the reign of Edward, the third from the Conquest, over England the twenty-sixth, and over France the thirteenth.

This deed gives us a good picture of the manors, into which all England was then divided. Each manor had its mill and its dovecote. Tenants were not allowed to keep pigeons, and were bound to bring their corn to the lord's mill to be ground. Most of the pasture was still in common for the use of all. Some tilled land the lord of the manor kept in his own hands; the rest was divided between free tenants and villeins. The latter were beginning

\* OLIVER, p. 349.

to pay a small rent instead of the customary dues and services. For example, the copyholders of Ottery St. Mary still pay\* the half-crown rent which Bishop Grandisson substituted for all customary services and all burdens but suit to mill and heriots, when he bought the manor of the chapter of Rouen in 1335. The lord employed a bailiff to farm that part of the manor which he kept in hand; and, if the customary services were not sufficient, he had to hire labourers at threepence a day. The villeins, or serfs, kept pigs and poultry, and generally fed some cattle on the common pasture.

This John d'Abernon seems to have built a side-chapel to our parish church, and dedicated it to St. Saviour. In our first Wardens' Roll, 1385-6, we have, amongst other offerings, "For the altar of St. Saviour, with the chapel of John Dabernoun, iii<sup>d</sup>."

Under this same abbot we have also a careful provision made for the vicar of Tavistock by the bishop of the diocese. As we have seen,† the appropriation of parish churches to monasteries involved the appointment of a substitute (*vicarius*) to do all the work of the parish, with such a miserable pittance, that he was often quite unable to meet the proper demands on the parson of a village or township. The outcry against this abuse had been growing louder since we first heard it from Richard of Devizes at the close of the twelfth century. Now, in the middle of the fourteenth, the bishops were making a stand, and insisting that vicars should be duly provided for: much as in our own time they have been

\* OLIVER, *Additional Supplement*, p. 22.

† Book ii. chapter xii.

looking after the interests of the curates. Thus Bishop Bytton, in appropriating the rectory of Burrington to our abbey in 1304, had taken good care for the maintenance of the vicar. And in 1309 we have the first clear mention of vicars for Tavistock and Lamerton. The following is a summary of good Bishop Grandisson's provision for the vicar of Tavistock. Having heard that there was a serious ground of dissension between his beloved brethren in Christ, the abbot and convent of Tavistock, on the one side, and Sir David Foote, perpetual vicar of the parish church, on the other side, the vicar asserting that there was no sufficient provision, by the bishop's ordinance, for the proper support of himself and his successors, and to enable them to bear the reasonable burdens of the parish, the bishop, wishing to cut off all occasion of doubt and discord, caused full and careful enquiry to be made as to all the fruits, rents, and profits of the parish; and, having examined these returns and discussed the matter with the parties interested, with their unanimous consent, he regulated and fixed the value of the vicarage and its allowances in the following manner: first, the vicar shall have from the abbot and the convent, in the name of his vicarage, free of rent, and with a sufficient garden adjoining, a decent house, containing at least a hall, a bed-chamber, a cellar, a kitchen, and a stable, as is meet. The vicar shall also have daily, throughout the year, one monk's provision or corrody; that is to say, two loaves and beer, and flesh or fish, as much as a monk has every day. Also the vicar shall have for his clothing thirteen shillings and fourpence annually at Easter; and for



the feed (*prebenda*) of one horse, twelve quarters of oats, and the tithe of the hay growing in the demesne of Lamerton. The vicar shall also have the tithe of one of the best gardens that he can find in the town of Tavistock; also, one good calf, one little pig, one cheese, one (keg of) butter, one lamb, one goose (*aucam*), and one fleece, such as he may choose from the tithing of the whole parish, all the rest of the tithes going to the abbey. He shall, also, have half the pence given, according to custom, at the solemnization of marriages, and on each of the principal feasts threepence. Moreover, he shall have from the abbot and convent, delivered to him by their bailiff, firewood of the value of six shillings and eightpence. The vicar shall, also, have the charge of one chapel\* in his church, as heretofore. On the feast of the Purification he shall receive from the sacristan of the monastery sixpennyworth of wax; and on every Lord's Day one penny, to be offered with the consecrated bread. That these orders may be duly carried out, the abbot, or cellarer, if convicted of deliberately neglecting them, shall pay twenty shillings to the building of the church at Exeter (that is, our beautiful cathedral, which, with its fine groined roof, Bishop Grandisson was eager to finish). The abbot and convent must acknowledge and bear all other burdens; but the burden of the office of dean rural the vicar must not shrink from, when it falls to his lot.

This instrument is dated at the bishop's manor of Chudleigh, 14th December, 1358. In the time of

\* Latin *capellariam*, as Sir John Peryn received £6 a year as Jesus' priest, in 1540. *Records*, p. 20.

Thomas Larkham voluntary gifts in kind seem to have been frequently made to the vicar. In his diary we have many such entries as these: "John Russell's maid brought me three chickens." "The wife of Richard Spry, a peck of wheat." "Mrs. Cudlip, wife of John, sent me a cheese." "Margaret Sitwell would not be paid for two-and-a-half lbs. of butter. Is she not a daughter of Abraham?"

In the same diary we often read of sums of money due to the vicar of Tavistock from the sheaf of Lamerton. These seem to have been paid very irregularly, but to have amounted to £50 a year.\* At the dissolution, 1539, the sheaf of Lamerton, *decima garbarum*, was worth £11 a year, and was counted amongst the spiritual possessions of the abbey. At the same time, the vicarage of Tavistock was valued at £29 17s. 8d. a year; but only £10 was reserved for William Launder, the actual vicar. Later in the year, however, November, 1539, it was proved † before the court of augmentation that the abbot used to allow the vicar £20 a year, besides keeping his manse (*mansio*) in repair; and, as it was known to all that Tavistock was a chargeable cure, so that the vicar must find a second priest to serve with him, the court ordered that the vicar should be allowed, in recompense of all tithes and emoluments, £20 a year, to be deducted from the £36, payable to the king, by Lord Russell and his heirs out of the profits of the church of Tavistock. The vicar was also to have twenty shillings a year for the repairs of his manse. With due allowance

\* *Diary*, p. 22, 2nd edition.

† OLIVER, p. 93.

for the change in the value of money, the vicar would seem to have been better off two hundred years earlier, when Bishop Grandisson's careful provision supplied him with all the necessaries of life, besides a little pocket money and some valuable perquisites.

It need hardly be said that the Russells have not, like some noble families, kept to the letter of the law, but have taken care that the vicarage of Tavistock shall increase in value in some proportion to the growth of the estate on which it is charged.

Dugdale refers to two instruments in the Harleian Manuscripts, number 862, bearing upon the duties of our abbey as the appropriator of parish churches. One is a demand upon our next abbot, Stephen (1362-1381), to supply the church of Abbotsham with office books for matins (*libri matutinales*), and to keep them in good condition. The other is an objection made to the demand of Sir Adam Tregonet, vicar of Antony, that the abbot and convent should keep up the chancel and the books of the church. Bishop Stapeldon's register, under the date 14th September, 1309, gives the provision, *taxatio*, for the vicar of Antony, answering very much to Bishop Grandisson's provision for our vicar.

It would seem that, in spite of the bishop's care, the vicar, David Foote, was dissatisfied with his provision, or else with his parishioners; for in October, 1360, less than two years after the bishop's award, he exchanged with Sir John, vicar of Boyton. The vicars before Foote, as far as known, were Sir John de Cameleforde, 1309; Sir John de Ockampton, 1311-12; Sir Robert Bodyer, 1318; and Sir Richard

de Bolham, 1349, who four months later became rector of Cadeleigh, and was succeeded by Sir David Foote. The other vicars of the fourteenth century, whose names have come down to us, are Baldwin Langdon, who succeeded John de Boyton in 1361-2; David Bagatorre, 1382; Simon Tony, who exchanged with John Hykedon, vicar of Landkey, in 1391; to be followed by John Lucas in 1400. The names of the vicars from 1400 to 1500, so far as known, are these: Roger Sturt, October, 1416; John Borneslo, December, 1416; John Baker;\* Edmund Rawlyn, 1427; William Mede, 1434; John Kene, 1439-40; John Skynner, 1443; Richard Haukeden, 1460; and William Davy.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### *ABBOT STEPHEN LANGDON, ENDSLEIGH, AND THE GREAT BRIDGE.*

By a commission from Bishop Grandisson, our next abbot, Stephen Langdon, received benediction from the excellent bishop of Bath and Wells, Ralph of Shrewsbury, who built the "Vicars' Close" at Wells, and surrounded the palace with a wall and a moat. Langdon's rule extended from 1362 to 1380-1; so that he witnessed the decline of England's glory in the last years of Edward III., and the social and political troubles of the early years of Richard II. Any thoughtful man must have recognised the signs

\* Prebendary Hingeston-Randolph, to whom I am indebted for these dates, tells me that the institutions of John Baker and William Davy are not recorded.

of transition. The days of chivalry were passing away and making room for policy and statecraft, whilst the pleasant security of the upper classes was being disturbed by the first shocks from the underlying mass of distress and poverty.

To this abbot Stephen, and his convent, William Eggecumbe, of Cotehele, released \* all his land lying within the park of Inneslegh (Endsleigh), which belonged to the said abbot and convent in their manor of Mideltone (Milton). The land, with the ditches (*fossatis*), and all things belonging to it, he guarantees to the abbot and convent for ever. The deed is dated at Cotehele, on the Monday before the feast of St. Clement, November 23rd, in the second year of Richard II. (1378), and the witnesses are Robert Langebroke, William Maynard, Robert Stephen, John Vautard, *i.e.* Valletort, Henry atte Combe, and others.

This William was the second son of Richard Edgcumbe, of Edgcumbe, in the parish of Milton Abbot. He may have distinguished himself in the French wars; for, in 1352, he married Hilaria, the heiress of Cotehele, who was a ward of the Black Prince, paying forty shillings on the marriage. The elder branch have owned the house and estate in Milton down to the present day. William was the founder of the younger but more distinguished family represented by that deservedly popular nobleman, the present earl of Mount Edgcumbe. Being content with his new home in the beautiful grounds of Cotehele, William Edgcumbe willingly surrendered to our abbey his portion of the family estate in

\* DUGDALE, num. 16.

Milton. His name is thus connected with the two most attractive places on the banks of the Tamar. Cotehele stands almost alone, in the West, as a sample of the transition from the feudal castle to the baronial hall; and, under the fostering care of the last four dukes of Bedford, Endsleigh, beautiful by nature, has been made one of the most delightful spots in the West of England.

Meanwhile, scions of the elder branch of the Edgumbes settled in Tavistock to make a living in business or the professions. The name occurs continually\* in our recovered documents and in our parish registers from early in the fourteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth. The antipathy of country gentlemen to provincial town-life is a feeling of modern growth. Until a hundred years ago, the country squire was proud to own a house in the neighbouring town, where he and his family could beguile the winter months with cheerful society. Two hundred years ago, John Locke spoke of country gentlemen setting up their younger sons in business in the nearest town as a matter of course; and in fact, in the seventeenth century, unless they had the adventurous spirit of a Robinson Crusoe, there was nothing else for them to do.

One of the documents recovered in 1886 was so torn that it was likely to be thrown aside as useless, but, on closer inspection,† it proved to be by no

\* In a survey of the boundaries of the borough made in August, 1738, amongst the witnesses are Robert, Richard, and John Edgumbe, the last being churchwarden.

† Rev. W. Y. Drake, then senior curate, examined the fragment and inserted a translation in the *Tavistock Gazette*.

means the least interesting of the series, for it was an appeal from Abbot Stephen to his faithful neighbours for help in restoring the stone bridge over the Tavy.

In early times the construction of bridges was so highly prized as to be associated with religion. Pontifex, "the bridge maker," now represented by Pontiff, was the title of the Roman Emperor, as head of the church as well as the state. In the middle ages, this useful art was held in equal reverence; guilds, or brotherhoods, were formed for maintaining bridges, just as they were for religious observances, and indulgences were offered as a reward for keeping them in repair. Our first stone bridge was supported by such a guild, and was, therefore, called "Guild Bridge." This was corrupted into Guile Bridge; as we read of Guile hall, for Guild hall, in a lease of 1651, and the change was turned to good account in the pretty myth\* of *Childe of Plymstock*.

The Guild Bridge crossed the Tavy about half way between Abbey Bridge and Vigo Bridge. It was standing, or its successor rather, in 1741, as may be seen in the old view of Tavistock in the public library. Up to 1500 it was known as the Great Bridge, to distinguish it from the little bridges of single blocks of granite which crossed the stream, or *lake* as it used to be called, that flowed down from Bannawell, by "*lake-side*," through higher and lower Market Street and Matthew Street to the river.

\* See PRINCE'S *Worthies*, under "Childe," from which Mrs. BRAY copied the story in her *Borders of the Tamar and Tavy*, vol. i. p. 387. There it is said that the old tomb in the churchyard is still called "Childe's tomb;" but I never heard that name applied to it.



This stream was, certainly, crossed by one small bridge at the "*Church-Bow*," that is, the archway at the north end of Church Lane that pierced the row of houses which then formed the north boundary of the churchyard. There was another such bridge opposite St. Matthew's chapel. This chapel stood at the south-west corner of the present inner market and gave its name to the street, which was cleared away in 1859, to make room for Bedford Square and the new market place. In a conveyance of 1500 we read of "the highway from the bridge of St. Matthew in the town of Tavistock towards the Great Bridge."

In another hundred years, this had become the East Bridge, for a West Bridge had been built to take the place of the ford which had hitherto satisfied the good folks of Rix Hill and Walredden, and of which our Ford Street still reminds us. In a lease of 1602 we read of "the street leading from the church towards West Bridge." Abbey Bridge was first built about 1761. In 1859 it was made more useful but less picturesque, to suit the increase of traffic to the Great Western Railway station. Vigo Bridge was built about the same time as Abbey Bridge.

By Ethelbert's charter of confirmation our abbey was bound, as we have seen, to keep in repair the bridges on its domain. But Abbot Stephen found it convenient to forget this; or, perhaps, Abbot Courtenay's wastefulness made it impossible. At all events, in 1370, he appealed to the faithful round about for aid, and the appeal was supported by twelve burgesses, the official predecessors, perhaps, of the

“eight men” of a later time. The names of the twelve are John de Meuwý, Richard Lamborne, John atte Forde, Richard Tope, Robert Reeke (? Peek), Roger Milleton, John Wendout (Windeat), Thomas Ock (? Cake), William Strout, Robert Ayschforde, Luke Selyman (Sleeman), and Robert Joce. After the salutation (*salutem in auctore salutis*), the abbot and the burgesses declare that bridges and other good works, wrought by their ancestors with much toil, are pressing daily for repair, and cannot be maintained without the aims of the faithful. For instance, the large stone bridge, which, in the place of a ford, has been built over the great water called Tavy, that comes running violently down from the moor, cannot be restored and kept up without the liberal help of the faithful. Therefore they request and earnestly entreat them to receive kindly John, their messenger and proctor in this business, and the trustworthy collector of alms for the bridge.

In spite of this earnest appeal the difficulty recurred; and, on 26th July, 1479, Bishop Courtenay of Exeter, during a visitation at Tavistock, offered an indulgence of forty days to all true penitents who should contribute to the construction and maintenance of the bridge of Tavistock.

## CHAPTER V.

*ABBOT CULLYNG AND MONASTIC DISORDERS.*

THOMAS CULLYNG was abbot of Tavistock from 1381 to 1402; that is, from the fifth year of Richard the Second to the fourth year of Henry the Fourth. In 1381 the outbreak of social discontent under Wat Tyler gave the first warning of hidden and unsuspected dangers. Chivalry may be considered to have been laid in the grave with Froissart. It survived, and still, we hope, survives, as a personal sentiment; but, as an influence in civil and political life, it was certainly dead and buried when Chaucer had been dead a year, and Froissart followed him in 1401. In that same year, William Sawtre, the parish priest of St. Osyth, by an Act of Parliament then just passed for the punishment of heretics, was burnt in Smithfield for denying transubstantiation—the first sad proof of the religious strife and cruelty that was in store for England. These struggles and sufferings must be regarded as necessary steps in our social and religious development. It is more disappointing to find unbelief and immorality flourishing, like rank weeds, beneath the outward prosperity and gay chivalry of the fourteenth century. The nation seemed to require some two hundred years of the hard discipline of civil war and Tudor and Stuart tyranny, before it would be fit to hold fast and enjoy the liberty it had all but secured under Edward III.

This spread of irreligion and immorality cannot be disconnected with the growing corruptions of the

church. Her ministers, from the pope to the friars, were very generally neglecting the spiritual good of the people, for their own profit or pleasure. The popes were said to be exacting from England alone a yearly income larger than that of any prince in Christendom. Moreover, they were continually thrusting foreigners into English preferments, or taking the stipends to enrich their own dependants. The statutes of Provisors and Præmunire were directed against this meddling with English rights and privileges. Nor were the native clergy more respected than the popes. The *Vision of Piers Ploughman* (1380) shows the wide-spread contempt in which the clergy were held by the lower and middle classes. The kindly satire of Chaucer, made more striking by the one exception of the "poore parson of a toune," explains how the church had come to lose its hold over the upper classes. It would seem that a selfish and worldly-minded clergy had produced practical unbelief and careless living amongst the laity; and spiritual religion was seeking its last refuge amongst the followers of Wicklif. Similar results, we are told, have followed from a similar cause in the Russia of to-day, where sincere belief and devout living are scarcely to be found except amongst some obscure sectaries.

The difference between the reformers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries shows how the church had fallen in public esteem. The Friars (the methodists of the thirteenth century) were the firm friends of Rome, and they wrought a great religious revival within the church. The Lollards, that is, the busy-speakers, the reformers of the

fourteenth century, protested vehemently against the prevailing church order and teaching, in the name of primitive Christianity and the New Testament. Their leader, John Wicklif, began his public career as master of Balliol, and the most learned schoolman of his time; but he soon developed into the public declaimer of clerical abuses, and ended with denouncing all classes of the clergy as anti-Christians and proctors of Satan.

Chaucer was more discriminating. On the one side, we have the beautiful picture of the village parson; on the other, the greedy convivial friar and the rascally pardoner and sumpnour; but between these extremes, we have the dainty, gentle prioress, and the jolly monk, referred to already, who has "many a dainty horse in stable," and whose chief delight is hard riding and "hunting for the hare."

In the time of Thomas Cullyng there was no lack of outward respect for religion in the parish of Tavistock.

In August, 1383,\* Bishop Brantyngham, of Exeter, granted his licence to David Bukketore, the poor hermit of the chapel of St. John the Baptist, to celebrate mass there. The house and property of "St. John's" marks the place where the chapel used to stand, beside its spring of pure and healing water. There was a cross by the well when Miss Evans wrote her *Home Scenes* in 1846.

In September, 1388, there was also a chapel of St. James at Milemead. In that same year, the abbot himself was finishing the campanile of the abbey church, and by 1391 he had secured a pleasant

\* OLIVER, p. 93.

country retreat in his house at Morwell ; for, in that year, Bishop Brantyngham granted\* his licence for the chapel there. This house is passed on the way to the most striking natural feature of our parish, the Morwell Rocks. Chapel and hall have been sacrificed to the convenience of a modern farm ; but externally it is still a good specimen of the mediæval barton.

Abbot Cullyng was more a builder than a hunter ; but the disorders begun in Courtenay's time culminated under his weak rule, and drew down upon the abbey episcopal visitation, followed by the most searching and elaborate injunctions. These imply a general break-down of monastic discipline, a sample of the general laxity which an easy-going abbot, such as Cullyng seems to have been, was not able to arrest. The injunctions were written from the bishop's manor of "Clist," 20th of September, 1387. They were read in the chapter-house of the abbey, and endorsed by the abbot and monks, 10th of August, 1388.

As Thomas Cullyng ruled here for fourteen years longer, and we hear of no more complaints, it is only fair to suppose that the bishop's strong hand brought back the monks into some sort of conformity with the rule of St. Benedict. The bishop exhorts them to return from the loose habits into which they have fallen, and to give heed to his precepts, under the penalty of eternal malediction. First, the daily and nightly offices shall be devoutly performed at the proper hours ; and, instead of wandering about and gossiping, the monks shall observe the fasts and

\* OLIVER, p. 91.

vigils, the silence, and the prayers, of the rule of St. Benedict. They are strictly forbidden to wear buttoned tunics, fashionable caps, beaked boots, linen shirts, or any other unbecoming dress. No monk, except the seneschal, cellarer, and other officers, in the way of business, shall go beyond the boundaries of the monastery, unless the abbot, or, in his absence, the prior, has given him leave; nor shall he converse at all with women, at least with any of doubtful character, but shall devote himself to books, and to the regular instruction given in the church and cloisters and in other places set apart for the purpose. The monks shall dress alike and eat together, two-thirds of them at least in the refectory; the Holy Scriptures being read at table according to the Rule, and their own chambers being no longer used for private feasts. The abbot is to set an example, eating with the monks in the refectory, at least on fish days, *i.e.*, days of abstinence, and sleeping in their dormitory, and making the monks take their rest clothed and girded. He is, also, to administer punishment without respect of persons, especially to the disobedient and the sowers of discord.

In the early days of English monasticism we have Eastwine,\* abbot of Wearmouth, doing voluntarily what Cullyng is ordered to do for the sake of example. Though he was of royal birth, Eastwine took to the lowliest labours with the other monks; nor when he was made abbot did he shrink from any toil, and he sat with the monks in the refectory and slept in their dormitory.

\* Simeon of Durham, in NEWMAN'S *Historical Sketches*, vol. ii. p. 403.



Turning to the question of waste and extravagance, the bishop's injunctions order that no grants, pensions, or corrodies, either in perpetuity or for a time, shall be given without the careful deliberation and unanimous consent of the abbot and convent, and for some reasonable cause, to the advantage of the monastery and the common good. The charters, instruments, deeds, treasure, and common\* seal of the monastery are to be kept under three locks and keys, according to ancient use; and no deed shall be signed with the common seal without the presence and consent of the greater and wiser part of the chapter. The abbot, the receiver (*receptor*), sacristan, cellarer, and other officers shall render an annual statement of accounts in the presence of the brethren; and shall draw up a faithful inventory of the chief possessions of the abbey, to be placed under safe keeping, so that the condition of the abbey may be known for the future. The alms usual in the monastery are to be given away without any diminution for other purposes; the sick and infirm to be oftener visited, and provided with suitable medicine, wholesome food, and all necessary conveniences. Youths and novices may not be put into any place of trust until they have completed the ordinary time of service, but shall have masters, or at least one, to instruct them in divine worship and the regular discipline. All the monks are to keep themselves from public and private feasts, and from drinking at unfit times and places, especially after

\* The abbot had his private seal, and would sometimes misuse it. OLIVER p. 7. For a description of the common seal see KEMPE'S *Notices*, p. 20; and for a drawing, the title-page of the same, and also of WORTH'S *Records*.

compline (*i.e.*, 9 p.m.). Nor may they disclose to outsiders the condition or the intentions of the house, or send letters, as they are wont to do, without the consent of the abbot or prior; and the rule of St. Benedict and the constitutions of the order must be more often read and explained in the chapter-house and elsewhere. The prior is to give good heed to the divine services, and to the convent in general, day and night, and not allow himself to be hindered by other business that does not especially belong to him. The sacristan is to have the light prepared in the dormitory. The abbot or the prior is to hear the confessions of the monks, or some suitable person deputed by them; and all the monks are to obey their superiors readily in all lawful and canonical orders, and submit to the corrections they have deserved. A man is to be provided by the governors of the house (*gubernatores domus*) to do the work of the laundry, and, as far as possible, all other work; so that women may have no excuse for entering the monastery. The precentor and the governors are to take care to supply the library with books and the church with vestments and ornaments, and to remedy any other defects into which the house has fallen. The abbot is to continue and complete the campanile of the church, and to do the necessary repairs in the dormitory, refectory, and cloister, or to have those places rebuilt. He must, also, have the door of the cloister firmly shut and bolted at the proper hours; and he must neither send, nor allow the monks to send or to sell, bread, beer, meat, fish, or any other victuals to those outside the monastery, as they have done hitherto; but the almoner is to dispense the

fragments according to his office, and as he thinks fit ; only, if any of the monks has a father or mother, brother or sister, poor and in need, in that case, with the consent of the abbot or prior, he may do this. Then, the rule as to keeping within the abbey precincts is repeated ; and especially, the monks are forbidden to enter the cemetery of the parish church which adjoins the monastery, or the parish church itself, or to be drinking and feasting in them or in the chamber of the gate of the cemetery, which leads into the town ; nor are they on any account to gossip (*confabulentur*) with men and women in any of these places ; the penalty being one day's fast on bread and water for each offence. The monks are to give up their old clothes to the chamberlain, for the use of the monastery or for the poor outside. They are only to eat flesh when the Rule allows, except by the special dispensation of the abbot ; and they are to go abroad greaved, and shod with shoes, or at least with slippers, and wearing frocks (*flocis*), according to the convenience of time and place. No monk is to hold two, and especially two incompatible offices, in the monastery. The abbot must not keep any personal servant or valet (*valectum*) to sow discord between him and the brethren ; and the monks are to have such proper supply of victuals as the means of the monastery allow. No land or possession is to be given by the abbot to any of the monks to be put out to farm (*ad firman*) ; nor may any lands or rents be granted or sold to any one for such purpose ; nor may neifs (*nativi*), men serfs (*servi*), women serfs (*ancillæ*), or marriages, belonging to the monastery be sold, given, or in any way alienated without the

deliberate consent of the abbot and convent, and then only under the pressure of necessity, and for the clear advantage of the monastery. Returning once more to the old charge of feasting and disorder, the injunction bids the cellarer secure, for the time to come, that no servants of the abbot or convent shall take any dishes or victuals into the town for wrong uses. Then, to make it quite clear what the abbey boundaries are, they are thus defined: the north wall of the conventual church, thence eastward where the cloisters begin, by some houses and courts stretching round to the hall of the abbot, and thence by his chamber to the cloister, by some houses and courts lying westward and contiguous to the cloister, and so on to the church again. This is somewhat vague, but fits in fairly well with the traditional site of the abbey. No mention is made of orchard, garden, or farm. Perhaps by this time the monks had given up manual\* labour, which would partly account for their falling into mischief; they were, therefore, confined to the abbey buildings to spend their time when not in church, in reading, or copying, or teaching.

As there had been already much ground of offence, and much delay in amendment, the abbot and convent are warned once, twice, and thrice, that, if these injunctions are not obeyed, they will be immediately suspended from divine worship, with heavier penalties to follow.

Perhaps it was a less heinous offence, in the eyes of Englishmen, that our abbot neglected for three

\* Bernard charges the monks of Clugny with having done so more than 200 years before. MAITLAND'S *Dark Ages*, p. 375.

years, 1408 to 1410, to pay the procurations due to the pope's collector.\*

Thomas Cullyng was probably a native of Tavistock, possibly a son of the Walter Cullyng of whom we read as one of the brethren of the light of St. Mary in the parish church in 1325. Perhaps he was brother of John Cullyng, who is mentioned in our first *Churchwardens' Account* (1385-6) as causing offerings to be paid to Sir Simon the vicar for the anniversaries of himself and his wife Sormunde. This may explain Abbot Cullyng's choice of Morwell for a country lodge. He had probably rambled and nattered in the woods by the Morwell Rocks as a boy, and therefore loved the place from early associations. His being a native may also partly account for his evident want of authority, on the principle that a prophet seldom has honour in his own country.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *ABBOT JOHN MAY, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND THE PORTREEVES.*

IN our next abbot, John May (or Mey), we have another Tavistock name. William May represented the town in Parliament in 1413 and 1421, and the name is still well known amongst us. History tells us nothing of this abbot but that he succeeded Cullyng in July, 1402, and died 7th February, 1421-2.

During these years, however, great events were happening. Tamerlane, the scourge of Asia, the terror of Europe, whose wild lust for conquest found

\* *Episcopal Registers*, Stafford, p. 346.

fitting expression in the grandly wild bombast of Christopher Marlowe, ended his lurid course of blood and fire in 1405. In 1414 the Council of Constance met under Emperor Sigismund, to reunite western Christendom, after the thirty-five years' schism between Rome and Avignon, and to bring disgrace on the Christian name and the honour of the empire by the burning of John Huss and Jerome of Prague. Thanks to Shakespeare, by this time England has become familiar to us as the home of Hotspur, Prince Hal, and Sir John Falstaff. Civil war, which before the close of the century well-nigh destroyed the old feudal aristocracy, shows its grim features on the field of Shrewsbury in 1403. And the second great episode in our hundred years' war with France culminates in the victory of our heroic Henry V. at Agincourt in 1415; a victory as much due to English endurance as Edward's victories sixty years before, or the great victory at Waterloo four hundred years later.

In our abbey things seem to have gone on quietly, after the severe reproofs bestowed upon Abbot Cullyng and his monks; and we may use the opportunity to enquire about our local government and our leading families, in the light thrown upon them by the old documents recovered in 1886.

As to local government, we first meet with a portreeve about 1320, and altogether the names of twenty-one occur in our early records. But the title carries us back to times before the Norman conquest. Literally, it means the reeve or keeper of the gate. Since, however, in our early history, as in that of eastern countries, exchanges and bargains were made

and a sort of market was held in the gate, the portreeve came to mean the governor of any market town, even though, like Tavistock, it never had a wall or a gate. Soon after their settlement here in England, if not before, the freemen of any place (leet or lathe) bound themselves in a frankpledge to be answerable for the peace, and in their court-leet they chose one of their number to preside over them for the next year, and he was called the portreeve.

We may assume that our portreeve became returning officer as soon as we sent members to parliament in 1295; but, as we had a portreeve before we were a parliamentary borough, there seems no reason why we should have lost our portreeve when we ceased to be a parliamentary borough in 1885. Nor is it essential that the portreeve should be a magistrate; rather, in this respect, the case of Tavistock was unique. For the portreeve did not represent the crown, as a mayor does, and this difference used to be marked by a portreeve walking first in a civic procession as the leader of his fellow-townsmen, whilst a mayor took the king's place in the middle or at the end. Besides presiding over the market and witnessing contracts, it was the business of the portreeve to "be the mouthpiece\* and representative man of the community, with the power of calling a meeting of freemen to consider any common subject." As we certainly need such a "representative" to call us together and preside over us on public occasions, it is much to be wished that this ancient office of portreeve may soon be revived; or some more popular equivalent substituted for it.

\* Mr. P. F. S. AMERY in *Trans. Dev. Assoc.*, vol. xxi. p. 302.



From the deed already referred to, as the first in which a portreeve is mentioned, he would seem, in those early times (about 1320), to have had a sort of town council to advise him. This was probably the same as the grand jury of freeholders who elected him in the court-leet; and from the appeal of Abbot Stephen Langton (1370) already noticed, it may be inferred that this council or jury consisted of twelve of the leading burgesses. Nearly two hundred years later, in 1540, we have "eight men" acting for the parish. These\* are sometimes identified with the feoffees of the lands belonging to the church and the alms houses, of whom we first read in 14 Henry VI., A.D. 1435. At other times they seem to be quite distinct from the feoffees. By 1660 the "eight men" had become the recognised "masters of the town and parish of Tavistock." They were probably elected for life; and up to the year 1711, they took an active part in all sorts of local matters, working amicably with such annual officers as the churchwardens, the overseers of the poor, and the surveyors of the highways. In 1677 these "masters" joined the portreeve in a petition to the earl of Bedford. This was amongst our parish records when they were examined by Mr. A. J. Kempe in 1830. It is not amongst them now, and was probably mislaid, with many others, during the forty years that the archives were in private hands. Fortunately the document is given in full in Mr. Kempe's *Notices of Tavistock*. It is a request that the little ruined cottage with two little gardens belonging to it, called St. John's Chapel, bought by the parishioners and turned into a pest-

\* Mr. R. N. WORTH in *Trans. Dev. Assoc.*, vol. xxi, p. 309.

house in the time of the plague (1626), and since then fallen into the earl's hands, may, of his "noble bounty and wonted charity," be granted to the town on a lease of ninety-nine years, terminable on three lives, at the "ancient rent of one shilling yearly." If their request is granted, the petitioners promise, "as it is our whole desire, so it shall be our choicest care, it (the cottage) be altogether converted to the use of the poor in your said town and borough, except great necessity constrain us again to convert it to a pest-house." This is called "The humble petition of your portreeve and the masters of your town and borough of Tavistock." It is signed by John Cudlip, portreeve, and seven others, amongst them being Michael Willesford, David Sargent, Walter Godbeare, and Richard Spry. If, as Mr. Worth\* suggests, these governors were appointed for life, it is difficult to make Mr. Kempe's date, 1677, agree with a lease of 1678, which mentions, as "masters or governors," three of these who signed the petition, viz., J. Cudlip, D. Sargent, and R. Spry, but, instead of the other names, gives us John Gerry, Richard Doidge, and John Toller. In succeeding leases, most of these are mentioned as feoffees of the parish lands. Perhaps the *eight* men had grown again to *twelve*, and some were present at one transaction, some at another. Of these, our leading burgesses two hundred years ago, other deeds tell us that Richard Doidge and John Gerry were "gentlemen"; John Cudlip and John Toller, "merchants"; Richard Spry and David Sargent, "tanners"; and Walter Godbeare, a "clothier." We hear no more of these masters

\* *Trans. Dev. Assoc.*, vol. xxi, p. 310.

or governors after 1711.\* In choosing them, and turning them to good use for nearly two hundred years, and then dropping them, Tavistock seems to have acted entirely on its own authority to satisfy its own needs; and in this it affords a good example of our English faculty of self-government.

There used to be a similar body of twelve men, who presided, with "a shadow of government,"† over the local affairs of the Isles of Scilly. Their shadowy authority has only been dispensed with, I think, quite lately, in favour of some more modern form of local government.

Tavistock is even now making a similar voluntary effort at self-government in its Mercantile Association.

The twenty-one portreeves made known to us through our parish records are the following: In the fourteenth century, Henry de Kestawyk, Robert Blake-smyth, Robert Kroker, Richard Kroker, Ralph atte Wylle, David de Milemete, John Wytham, Walter de Lanstharaford (Longford), John atte Forde, William Stapeldon, William Mey (May), Richard Estecote, William Thorne, Richard atte Barne, Robert Aysforde, and Walter Bradeleygh (? Brayley); in the fifteenth century, John Walraddon, John Lybbe, Richard Piper, Richard French, William Aysheforde, William Drake, and Richard Lybbe. The last being called mayor instead of portreeve, and the first, Henry de Kastawyk, "senior of Tavistock." The rest are described as "portreeve," "then portreeve,"

\* For further details of the early municipal life in Tavistock see Mr. R. N. WORTH in *Trans. Dev. Assoc.* vol. xxi. p. 310.

† BORLASE, *Isles of Scilly*, p. 133.

or "then portreeve of the borough of Tavistock." Walter of Lanstharaford and Richard Piper are mentioned as portreeves in two documents, the former in 1360-61, the latter 1406-7, the others only in one. In the 1406 document we have mentioned a Reginald Gylle (Gill) and Alice his wife. Five\* deeds lately discovered in the muniment room at Killerton give us the names of four other portreeves of Tavistock. All the deeds refer to a tenement and garden between the mill brook and the road to Inchcombe, and they found their way to Killerton in this fashion. The tenement, which had belonged to William Prince, of Tavistock, and then to John Smyth, of Exeter, passed to the Hacches, of Wolleigh, in Bedford. Baldwin Malet married the heiress of this family, and, after a while, Sir Arthur Acland, ancestor of the Right Hon. Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, married the heiress of Malet. Two of the deeds are dated 1311, and give us "John Carchere, then portreeve of the borough of Tavy-stoke." The other three are dated 1335, 1396, and 1465, and give us as portreeves Laurence de Hauesworthy, Walter Bachelere, and Roger Cake. The two latter names are familiar in our history, the two others are unknown. Apart from the portreeves, most of the names in these Killerton documents are found in our own records; but in the first, 1311, we meet with William Prince, Richard Onger, David Matheu, Robert Blackafund, and Robert Schurrena, otherwise unknown.

In a survey of the boundaries of the borough, 7th

\* Printed by Mr. WINSLOW JONES in *Notes and Gleanings*, February, 1891.

August, 1738, William Rowe, portreeve, signs first, and William Browne, vicar, next.

The first portreeve to sit on the bench as justice of the peace was Nathaniel Beard,\* surgeon. He was the son of the Rev. Nathaniel Beard, who was vicar of Tavistock from 1701 to 1730. In recognition of the honour thus secured, John, Duke of Bedford, presented to the town the silver maces, which record the fact with the following inscription: "The gift of His Grace, the Most Noble John, Duke of Bedford, at the election of Nathaniel Beard, Esq., the first Portreeve of Tavistock in the Commission of the Peace for Devon, September 29th, 1761." This privilege, being lost, was only recovered by our worthy townsman, Mr. Samuel Richards, in the year 1880. His success in claiming the right is recorded in this further inscription on the silver maces: "The Freeholders of Tavistock record on these Maces that the dignity and duties of a Justice of the Peace for the County of Devon were restored to the office of Portreeve by Samuel Richards, elected 9th November, 1879, re-elected 1880 and 1881." The right thus recovered was exercised by Mr. John Daw, and then by Mr. Russell Harris, during whose term of office the dignity of portreeve fell into abeyance in 1885.

\* This Nathaniel Beard was uncle of my mother's grandmother, Mrs. Daniel Pring, of Awliscombe; and we have still in the family a constable's staff with his name upon it.

## CHAPTER VII.

*ABBOT THOMAS MEDE, OUR EARLY M.Ps., CHURCH-  
WARDENS, AND OLD FAMILY NAMES.*

THOMAS MEDE was abbot from March, 1421-2, to April, 1442. There was a suspicion of his drifting into the old faults of Abbots Courtenay and Cullyng—neglect of discipline and dilapidations. To answer for these, and also the further charges of simony and incontinence, he was cited\* before Bishop Lacy in October, 1437. As to dilapidations, he was accused especially of cutting down the trees at Madercliff, Blakemore, Oldwood, Byllyngsbear, Parkwood, and Hurdewyck. The charges seem to have been exaggerated, and the abbot was able to clear himself by oath in May, 1438. In 1429 he had surrendered to the prior of Plympton his claim to the church of Plymstock, though our abbey retained the manor of Plymstock until the suppression of the monasteries.

Perhaps we may regard Abbot Mede's misconduct as a reflection on a small scale of the general disorder and decadence of the time. For during these twenty years we were losing our conquests in France before the enthusiasm of Joan of Arc; and here at home, in the minority of Henry VI., the counsels of the nation were distracted by the factions of his uncle, the duke of Gloucester, and his great-uncle Cardinal Beaufort.

Let us follow up the search into our old records, and see what they can tell us about the leading

\* OLIVER, p. 92.

family names in Tavistock five hundred years ago.

Tavistock was summoned to send members to parliament, not as a chartered town, but either as belonging to the royal demesne, or by reason of the fame of its abbey. In those first days of representation, the franchise was regarded\* as a heavy burden instead of a noble privilege. Many towns persuaded the sheriffs not to give in their names, and so became voluntarily disfranchised. Torrington went further, and obtained a charter of exemption. Tavistock would seem to have made no effort thus to shirk its duty; for, from 23 Edward I., 1295, when parliaments began to be called together regularly, our members are seldom wanting.

Whilst in counties the franchise was limited, in 1430, to 40s. freeholders, equivalent† to £200 in land at the present time; in boroughs the right of voting was most capricious,‡ being in some towns very exclusive, whilst in others there was universal suffrage. It was expected that towns should send up their own burgesses; so that a list of early members of parliament gives us, for the most part, the names of the leading men then living in the town they represent. Both knights of the shire and burgesses of the towns were paid, the former 4s. a day, the latter 2s. The payment was a charge on the local taxes, and was often felt to be a heavy burden; but it enabled local men of moderate means to sit in parliament, whilst it was far too scanty an allowance

\* HALLAM, *Middle Ages*, vol. iii. p. 115.

† THOROLD ROGERS, *British Citizen*, p. 97.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 93.



to bribe adventurers to undertake the office. Neither payment nor glory tempted men to compete for a place now rightly held in the highest honour; so that a contested election was almost unknown: and, if there ever was such a thing, it was settled on the nomination day by show of hands.

We might presume that all our M.Ps. for one hundred and fifty years were men of Tavistock or its immediate neighbourhood; but this is made certain for the majority by their names occurring in our contemporary records, and, in some cases, by the identity of the family names with the names of places in the parish. Thus we can say that our leading families, from 1295 to the accession of Edward III., were Secheville, Wise,\* de Romeleghe, Bone (Bonus), Eckworthy, Iby, and Stacy. In the first twenty-five years of Edward III., besides other Stacyes, Sechevilles, and Eckworthys, we find Magha, Gages, Ottery, de Kyleworthe (Kilworthy), Tankard, Popilstone, Folke, Davy, and atte Wille, *i.e.* at the Well, represented later by the somewhat similar names of atte Pole (Pool) and Bithewatere. From 1350 to 1400, by the same double test, our chief families were Langeford, Portejoie, Paynter, Lamborne, Broke, Crockere, Windoute (Windeat), Forde, Samforde, Hunte, Walradene (Walreddon), Millemete, Whitham, Row, Plente, and Baker. Of these, Walter Langeford sat at intervals in eight parliaments between 1355 and 1378, and Ralph Hunte in seven between 1382 and 1402. From 1405 to 1478, besides several

\* Would this be a connection of the Sir Thomas Wise who built Sydenham House, and was also the owner of Mount Wise in Devonport?

of the old names occurring again, as May and Wys, we have Tayle, Fys (and Fitz), Sprye, Tankret, Crwys, Eggecombe, and Honychurch.

The wars of the Roses left our kings very independent of parliament. The blue book gives us no M.Ps. for Tavistock from 1478 to 1529, *i.e.* 17 Edward IV. to 21 Henry VIII., and again from 1529 to 1553, the first year of Queen Mary; the fact being that parliament was only summoned occasionally and very capriciously during this period. After these long intervals, when Tavistock ran a good chance of being entirely disfranchised, we were represented as regularly as before. But local names no longer predominate; though we have John Fytz and a John Evelyghe, and John and Francis Glanvill, the two distinguished sons of Judge Glanvill of Kilworthy. For, by this time, to sit in parliament was a coveted honour, which brought to Tavistock the surrounding gentry, such as Sir Baptist Hext, Sir John Radcliffe, and Robert Ferrers, or even strangers from a distance, such as Sir Nicholas Throkmorton, Edward Bacon, Anthony Asheley, Walter Wentworth, and Sir John Fleetwood. But, in these later times, our chief glory has been to have had such representatives as John Pym, from 1623 to 1627; the patriot Lord William Russell, in 1660 and 1661; and the doughty champion of reform, Lord John Russell, in 1830 and 1831.

We may gather from our records some other names of interest, especially those still familiar amongst us. In our earliest deed, 1286, occurs Galfridus Cake, whose family gave its name to Cakeshill, and only disappeared from Tavistock in the present century.

From 1286 to the death of Edward II., 1327, we meet with Robert Davy, Walter Gilla (Gill), Ranulph Cissor (Caser), Robert David, and John Pers (Pearse). Under Edward III., 1327-1377, we have John de Northcote, Luke Wyndyshore (Windsor), John Drake, Robert Mydelstonas (Middelton), John Russell, Robert Eva, John Weryng and Richard Tope. Under Richard II., 1377-1399, we find, besides old names recurring, John Flammek (Flamank), Nicholas Rychard, and Robert Lucas. Under Henry IV. and V., 1399-1422, we have John Maynard in 1402, and Reginald Gylle in 1406; as well as William Coule (Cole), Thomas Brune (Brown), and John Samson. Under Henry VI., 1422-1460, we have in 1430 John Kelly, clerk, and in 1434 Richard Sopere and John Fytz; and after these a Salter, a Durrant, a Tanton, a Hill, John Harry, Philip Debell (Doble), a Mason, a Row, Skinner, Codelyppe (Cudlip), and Snawdon. From 1460 to 1500 the chief new names are Ware, Knygth (Knight) Dunning, Bocher, Bachelor, Toker, Alyn, Mayster, Saull (and Sawell), Willughby, Tremayn, Foster, and Webb. From 1500 to 1614, when our church registers begin, we have, in 1525, John Rowe, serjeant-at-law, and John Tawton, clerk; and, besides other new names, we find Benet, Hawkyng, Prediaux, Williams, Sybley, Tooker, Tailor, Hart, Glub, Sargent, Newton, Grylls, Denys, Cornish, Gaud, Prout, Glanfyld (Glanvill), Nycholls, Burne, Redstone, Watts, White, Vosper, Pike, and Peek, Lavers, Truscott, Wonnacott, Widdecombe, Bate, and Trowte, and, soon after, Madaford and Merifield.

In this connection it may be well to give the

names of our earliest churchwardens, though indeed they bore various titles; *e.g.*, "warden of the light of the church of the blessed Eustachius of Tavistock," or, simply "warden of the light," or "warden of the store of the blessed Eustachius," or "warden of the high store of the parish church of Tavistock." These were suitable titles; for the keeping up the lights in the church was one of the warden's most costly duties; and moreover they had in charge, in those days, a considerable yearly income, besides cattle and sheep, and a valuable store of plate and vestments.

Not until 1555-6 do we find the simple title, "Warden of the parishe church of Tavistocke." In 1561-2, for the first time, we have two "wardens of the paryshe church"; *viz.*, Richard Webbe and John Bowden of Kylleworthye. So that Kilworthy did its duty by the church three hundred years ago, as it has done lately, for many years, in the person of our worthy parish warden, Mr. George Battams, of Kilworthy House.

In 1594-5 a lady and her husband were churchwardens; for the account for that year is headed with "Margaret and John Wythecomb, wardens of the parish church."

Our earliest wardens' accounts (the first being the earliest extant), are for 1385-6, for 1392-3, and for 1399-1400. For these years the wardens were Reginald Stropa, John Tauntoun, and William Webber. But the accounts tell us, in each case, who was warden in the preceding year; and these were Thomas Leye, Andrew Vendake, and John Hopere.

Our next group of accounts reaches, with intervals, from 1401 to 1427; viz., for 1405-6, for 1407-8, for 1411-12, for 1423-4, and 1425-6.

The wardens made known to us in their order in this period are the following: John Ayssheforde, John Pasude, Stephen Errell, John Drake, Walter Wyndesore, John Nyks, called governor of the church, in 1411; then, from 1423, John Plente, William Ayssheforde, William Gerard, Richard Durrant, Richard Pipe (? Pike), Thomas atte Oke, and Nicholas Forde.

The account for 1470-1 stands isolated. It gives us John Brune (Brown) as warden for that year, and John Foster for the year before. Our next account is after an interval of more than sixty years.

In the sixteenth century we have some parish accounts preserved. They give us these churchwardens: in 1537,\* John Watts; in 1538, Roger Collen and John Lybbe; in 1541, John Sawell; in 1542, John Durrant; in 1543, John Cowch. In 1552 Walter Gloubbe (Glubb) is called "warden of the parish."

As we noticed above, in 1555 we have for the first time "warden of the parish church." The title is used of Richard Bater. John Franckelyng was warden the year before. The two wardens of 1561, of whom we spoke above, were succeeded by John Edgcombe and Walter Rowe. After that, we have, in 1566, William Houghton and John Glanfyld, styled again, as many of their successors are, "Wardens of the store of the parish church." They were succeeded by William Prideaux and Thomas Lybbe. In 1574,

\* These dates include part of the next year, being from Easter to Easter.

the wardens were Anthony Nycols and Richard Sawell, following upon Richard Glubbe and Richard Brewen (Brown). The next year they were John Dunrydge and Walter Payne. In 1588, they were Thomas Boles and John Collyn; and in 1594, as we have seen, "Margarett and John Wythecomb."

A churchwardens' book was recovered, with our old records, in 1886. Amongst other things, it contains a list of parish officers, and an account of collections made for various purposes. Mr. Worth, in his *Tavistock Records*, has printed the chief items of interest, and especially a list of wardens from 1655 to 1733, and the parish collection for the redemption of the captives in Turkey in the year 1670. This last gives us a full view of all but the very poorest people in the parish in 1670: and we may refer to the former for the names of our churchwardens from the year 1655. The churchwardens' books—by the recovery of another volume last year—now reach, without a break, from 1655 to the present time, and are secured in the fire-proof safe in the vestry.

From 1600 to 1655 our early accounts give us as wardens: in 1605, John Glubbe and Richard Cudlipp; in 1606, William Smith and John Brewen; in 1618, John Elford and Arthur Peeke; in 1627, Daniell Sleeman and Walter Godbeare; in 1628, Francis Vennyngs; in 1629, Roger Gibbs and Raphe Peeke. For managing the almshouse, these two churchwardens are associated with Matthew and Thomas Edgcombe, William Grilles, John Gerrye, and Richard Willesford. In 1632, the wardens are Robert Tickle and John Luggier; in 1633, Thomas Pointer and

Robert Cudlipp; a few years after, Richard Crymes\* and Stephen Rundle; in 1654, William Dier and John Russell. Then, the list in the wardens' book begins, in 1655, with Henry Vosper and John Elford, followed in 1656 by Nicholas Watts and Robert Wood; and in 1660 by Alexander Gove and John Nosworthy.

But we have more substantial evidence to confirm or fill up that of our written records. The enormous amount of wine consumed at the great festivals, amounting in 1684-5 to eight quarts at Michaelmas, twelve at Christmas, and thirty-six at Easter, made new and larger flagons necessary. These were of pewter, and four of them are inscribed with the names of the churchwardens. The largest has the names of Thomas Poynter and Robert Cudlipp, 1633; the smallest those of Alexander Cove and John Nosworthe, 1660. The two intermediate ones are inscribed, "Ralph Worth and Richard Peek, churchwardens, 1638," and a pewter dish with deep scalloped edge has "Richard Peek" inscribed in the centre. Thus our pewters tell us, what our written records do not, that our local hero, "Manly Peek," returned from his exploits in Spain to settle down to quiet life and the homely duties of a churchwarden in his native town.

Many of the names in this paper are still familiar in Tavistock. Others, having found a place for many

\* Richard Crymes, of London, haberdasher, bought the manor and living of Buckland of the Crown in 1546. The manor passed to the Slannings in 1660; but the Crymes kept the patronage of the living till 1710. OLIVER, p. 382. The family of Crymes appear at Kilworthy, in 1685, in Mr. S. Baring-Gould's local story of *Urith*.



generations in our records and registers, have only disappeared from the parish within the last fifty years. Such are Cake, Fitz, Hogeson, Launder, Peek or Pike, Popplestone, Tooker; and some of these, with several that left us earlier, are found still in the neighbouring parts of Devonshire, *e.g.*, Condy, Crocker, Gaud, Grylls, Libby, Tope, Windsor, Wise, and Worth.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *ABBOTS THOMAS CRYSPOYN AND WILLIAM PEWE, AND OLD TAVISTOCK.*

THOMAS CRYSPOYN\* was chosen abbot June 11, 1442, and died April 5, 1447. William Pewe was elected May 2, 1447, and died December 26, 1450. This is all we know of two men who, for a few years at least, were men of some mark in their own time.

During these eight years affairs at home were drifting from bad to worse, under the weak government of Henry VI., and the arrogance of his French wife, Margaret of Anjou. The general discontent broke out into actual revolt under Jack Cade in 1450; and the disaffected, especially in London and the eastern counties, then the most prosperous and thickly-populated, began to look for deliverance to the duke of York, who had won golden opinions, in 1449, by his mild and successful government of Ireland.

Abroad, the doom of the eastern empire was sealed by the defeat and death of Ladislas, king

\* KEMPE, *Notices*, p. 6., says he had been *prior* of the monastery; but neither DUGDALE nor OLIVER seem to know anything of this.

of Hungary, at the battle of Varna, November 10, 1444.

Meanwhile, learning was diligently cultivated both at home and abroad. In 1442, John Faust, at Mentz, improved upon the great discovery of the age, the printing press, invented by John Guttenberg of Strasburg in 1440. In 1444, Cosmo de Medici founded the library at Florence. In 1446, Cardinal Bessarion, the founder of the library of St. Mark at Venice, was encouraging the study of Plato; and in 1447, Pope Nicholas V. founded the library at the Vatican. Here in England, in this same year 1447, grammar schools began to be established in London; and in 1448 Queen's College, Oxford, was founded by Margaret of Anjou, answering to King's College, Cambridge, founded by Henry VI. in 1443.

From this short review of things in general, let us turn again to our own parish, and see what our old records can tell us about the geography of the town and neighbourhood in those far-off times. They supply us with a fairly adequate picture; and, judging from the fragmentary evidence left us, we may reasonably conclude that, if the evidence were more complete, we should find that scarcely a farm or field had changed its name in the last five hundred years, though the same words may be disguised in all sorts of spelling.

The precincts of the abbey stretched from the river to the churchyard, and from the public library and guildhall to the old gateway in the vicarage garden. A good part of the New Road and Abbey Mead went to form the abbey gardens, orchards, and meadows; and the site of stew ponds for storing fish

could be recognised in 1830 by "some banks and willows."\*

Before going further I must beg the reader to understand that nearly all the names of places in the following survey actually occur in our early records, though spelt variously; and, moreover, that there was no Parkwood road then, and no new Plymouth road, and the best roads were only fit for horse traffic.

South of the great bridge was beyond the borough. And here probably some land belonged to the Godolphins, and gave the name of "Dolvin" to that part of the town, till lately known also as "Guernsey." To avoid the cumbersome use of the past tense, let us fancy ourselves looking about Tavistock some four hundred years ago and recognizing streets and places as we believe they were then.

A walk on the Dolvin side up the river takes us past St. Margaret's chapel in the Mount Tavy woods, by Rowden, with Nutley and Kingford on the right, to Tavy St. Peter, and so on to the outlying parts of the parish, Cudliptown and Baggetorre. A walk down the river westward takes us past Crelake through Pixon Lane towards Birchwood and Walreddon.

Coming back to the Dolvin, and crossing the bridge and Lower Brook Street, we push on into Higher Brook Street, or, as it was also called, East Street, and so passing "the water called Millabrook"† we soon reach the old Exeter road, either by Fleet

\* KEMPE's *Notices*, p. 8.

† Old deed of 1335 printed in *Notes and Gleanings*, February, 1891.

Street, answering to Pepper Street, or by the Stairs\* at the corner of Elbow Lane. Here, passing Oldwood and skirting the ancient camp on the height, with Parkwood below, we presently descend rapidly to beautiful Endescomb, or Inscombe; a favourite haunt of our poet, William Browne, where he learnt to write his melodious verses to the music of the Walla. Half-a-mile up the next hill brings us to the hamlet of Wilminstone, or Winstone, with Blackediche or St. Saviour's Mead lying near.

If, now, we resume our post on the town side of the great bridge, and turn to the left instead of the right, we pass along Lower Brook Street into St. Matthew's Street, with St. Matthew's chapel on the left hand; and presently passing the mill of my lord abbot, the gate of the abbey and the churchyard, bounded on the east by Couch's almshouses and other tenements, we come into Lower Market Street, with the stream or "lake" from "Lake-side" running down the middle of it. Thence, with the Church-bow and the adjacent houses on our left, we come into West Street. When we have gone as far as the "reeve," or "cause," with Moore's almshouses on our left, we turn to take breath and enjoy the fine view over the town and the Tavy valley to the rugged tors of Dartmoor. And here we can take the lane to the right and go up by Cakeshill and Mounthungary to the high way to Lamerton, with Inneswill, Downhouse, Stylesweke, Churchparks or Pettypace, Milemead, Langford, and Eckworthy,

\* For this and many other old names of places *not* in our records I am indebted to Mr. Edward Rundle, who knows much more about Tavistock than any other man living.

giving distinction to the fields and farms round about; just as they do now; or we can keep right on, past "the well,"\* which figures so often in early Tavistock surnames, into Ford Street, which, long before West Bridge† was thought of, used to lead to the ford over the Tavy. Here again, at the turn to the river, another road leads right on to the lazar house and the Maudlin chapel. One would think there must have been another way from the centre of the town to this chapel by "a little lane called Maggelane," and over the hill through fields by St. Maryhay—Madge, like Maudlin, being merely a corruption of Magdalene—but the surmise is not well supported. From the lazar house, and crossing the upper Pixon Lane, with the Maudlin parks on the right and Pashill (Parswell) on the left, we come to Lamborne (Lumburn). From Lumburn we climb the steep old road to Morwell down. Here, leaving Crebor and Bucktor on the left, on the right, near at hand, we have Newton and Gulworthy, and further off Rubbytown, Woodovis, Ogbear, and Ottery. Crossing the open down, we call at Morwell Barton for lunch, and perhaps meet there William of Worcester, "Devon's earliest topographer," the friend and secretary of the warrior Sir John Fastolf, on his way from St. Michael's Mount. Then, having enjoyed the surprise of the great cliffs above the Tamar, we should drop down through the coppice wood, with its anemones and bluebells, to Morwellham, to cross by the ferry to Harewood and Calstock.

\* *Tavistock Records*, pp. 79 and 94, &c.

† First mentioned in 1602.

A second branch road to the left by Parswell would lead us to Crowndale, Shillamill, to what were called later the Particliff Woods, by the "Berecause," *i.e.* the pathway or road to Bere, to Romansleigh, and Hartshole, above the hanging woods of Ramsham, another favourite haunt of William Browne, and so to the extremity of the parish, at Gawton on the Tamar.

Once more at the Church-bow, let us turn to the right into Higher Market Street. Presently, in what is now Bank Square, we come upon a fine town cross,\* the centre of the "Lower Market" place, and surrounded with stalls, at least on Fridays. Off to the right, through Butcher Street, at the foot of the steep road leading by "Sondepark" (Sandy-park) to Kilworthy, stands the pillory. Passing up Higher Market Street, we reach the "Higher Market" at the opening into King Street; thence up through Bannawell, or by "Lake-side," we come to the spring that gives Bannawell its name. Till some forty years ago the spring was protected in the "Buddle House," where its waters entered the pipes that conveyed them to the conduits at the two market places. Just above, to the right, is the steep little valley of Billingsbeare, the drainage of which feeds the "lake" that flows down through the middle of the streets to the Tavy. Still on the right are the fields, called the "Waddons" then as they are now. A mile further, and on the left, we find the old manor house of Hurdwick. This seems to have been the original name of the hundred of Tavistock. It was a barony

\* Mr. Rundle tells me the Lower Market House was built, in 1552, on the site of the great cross.

of sixteen knights' fees and a half, and it gave his title of baron to Abbot Richard Banham when he sat in the House of Lords. A fine old Gothic barn\* stood there till about 1830, and the house was occupied by Mr. Wilson, the Duke's steward, whilst the present manor house was building. Mr. Kempe thinks that this was probably Ordgar's residence, and that the name may be a corruption of Ord-wick, that is Ordgar's Wick.

All the roads were then as narrow and steep as the old road to Gulworthy; but this did not matter much when travelling was done on foot or on horseback. Of course Tavistock, compared with other places of the same size, was more lively then than it is now. The abbey made it a centre of importance, and would involve the coming and going of many messengers. Then there would be the M.P.s. to bring news from London, and returning soldiers with the last report from Calais or Guienne. Pack-horses would be taking hides and kersies across the moor to Exeter, and the labourers, loyal and contented under the generous treatment of the abbey,† would thank heaven that they were well out of the broils stirred up by their more enlightened, but less happy, fellow-toilers in the eastern counties.

\* KEMPE, *Notices*, p. 19.

† THOROLD ROGERS, *The British Citizen*, p. 73. "The working classes were very prosperous during the fifteenth century."



## CHAPTER IX.

*ABBOT JOHN DENYNGTON AND THE PONTIFICALIA.*

LIKE Alan of Cornwall, John Denyngton was prior of the Isles of Scilly before he was made abbot of Tavistock. Very likely he had been a monk here in Tavistock before he went to Tresco; and having shown himself a man of parts, was now recalled by his brethren to rule over them.

In March, 1442-3, Prior Denyngton had received a commission from Edmund Lacy, bishop of Exeter, to inquire into and correct and punish all excesses amongst the islanders. This commission is more creditable to the prior than to his people, and suggests that the Scillonians had not then secured the high character for temperance and self-control which they have now long enjoyed.

Abbot Denyngton ruled over the monks of Tavistock from early in 1451 to his death in 1462. Those were stirring times, and at home very sad times.

Abroad, the last link with the ancient world seemed to be broken when Constantinople was taken by the Turks in 1453. But even Constantinople was to confirm the truth, proved already by the overthrow of Jerusalem and Rome, that to give new life to the world, cities, like men, must die. For it was due to the dispersion of Greek thought and culture, consequent upon the destruction of the eastern Roman Empire, that the great mental and spiritual revival broke out in Europe in the fifteenth century, and awoke that zeal for liberty of thought and conscience,

that enthusiasm for art and literature, and that general fresh energy of life, which we call the Renaissance.

At home, discontent came to a head with the failure of our last effort in France, when, in this same year, 1453, the veteran Earl Talbot, and his son Lord Lisle, lay dead on the field of Castillon. Then the good king's attacks of imbecility stirred the ambition of his cousin Richard duke of York. The people found other excuses for discontent in the luxury and the favouritism of the court of the young queen, Margaret of Anjou. Probably the Yorkists were regarded also as more favourable to trade, and less hostile to the new religious opinions of the Lollards than the Lancastrians had proved themselves. At all events, in the quarrel that followed, whilst even families were rent asunder, yet on the whole, as in our other civil wars before and after, England was divided pretty evenly, the north and west against the midlands and the east; and in this case the Yorkists were backed by the midlands and the east; that is, the most forward parts, as against the north and the west, which were the most backward parts of the country at that time.

The war was entered upon slowly, and began at St. Albans (1455) with some show of reason and moderation; but from the murder of the young earl of Rutland at Wakefield (1460) it became hot and furious. Revenge ruled the day; no quarter was given; and on both sides prisoners, especially leaders, were killed on the battle-field. This was simply a return to barbarism, and was a terrible falling-off from the courteous chivalry of the days of the Black

Prince. France, finding England at her mercy in these terrible distractions, descended upon our coasts, and ravaged them with impunity, bringing upon us most just judgment for invading her, when she was weak with exactly similar distractions, forty years before.

Here, in Devon, we had a bishop, George Neville, brother of the great earl of Warwick, and utterly devoted, like all his family, to the house of York. But Courtenay, earl of Devon, adhered to the king, and probably carried more weight than the north-country bishop. The bitter quarrel extinguished his branch of the family, for his eldest son, Thomas, was beheaded after Towton; his second son, Hugh, was beheaded in 1466; and his third son, John, died sword in hand at Tewkesbury.

Our abbot, at all events, was loyal to Henry VI. in his misfortunes. Probably he advanced money for the royal cause; and in February, 1457-8, he was repaid by a royal licence to apply to the pope for leave to wear the pontificalia. This licence is given in Dugdale and in Oliver, and is, in fact, a dispensation to allow the abbot to receive letters and license from Rome for the bestowal of this privilege, in spite of the statutes of provisors and *præmunire*. By this licence John Denyngton is to solicit, and have permission from the sovereign pontiff to use the mitre, sandals, and other pontifical insignia, and to give the blessing in the service of the mass and on other solemn occasions, with the same authority and in the same manner as a bishop. This dignity is to be enjoyed by Denyngton and his successors for ever; so that the few remaining rulers of our monastery are to be regarded as mitred abbots.

The very word "pontificals" for a bishop's dress and privilege shows how entirely hierarchical had become the order of the Christian Church; but that a mere presbyter, like our abbot, might be allowed the same privileges as a bishop, under special circumstances, is a far-off reminder of the original co-ordinate authority of bishops and presbyters.

This whole transaction shows us the delicate relationship between the bishop and the great abbeys in his diocese. Practically, there was almost continually a struggle going on for authority on the one side and independence on the other. It, also, shows that whilst, in the later middle ages, England was strenuous in protesting against papal encroachments on the rights of the crown or the privilege of patrons, she had not yet thought of questioning the supremacy of Rome in things purely spiritual. The king must give the abbot licence to apply to Rome, to avoid the penalties of English statutes; but no one dreamt of the abbot assuming the habit and mitre of a bishop without the direct sanction of the pope.

Probably because of his energy in thus increasing the dignity of the abbey, John Denyngton is credited by Mr. Kempe\* with re-building considerable portions of its fabric; and it is quite true that what remains of the monastic buildings mostly belongs to the latter half of the fifteenth century. But no account of work done has come down to us; and very likely several of the abbots from 1450 to 1500 had a share in it.

In or about Denyngton's time, great changes must have been made in the parish church. For, as we

\* *Notices*, p. 6.

noticed in a former chapter, the tower window and the three east windows, instead of being in the Decorated style of the church consecrated in 1318, belong to that phase of the Perpendicular style which prevailed about the close of the reign of Henry VI.

## CHAPTER X.

### *ABBOT RICHARD AND COWICK PRIORY.*

OUR next abbot, known to us only as Richard, held rule here for about twenty years from 1462. The English history of the time is not cheerful reading. There was the bloody battle of Towton, near York, in 1461, which cost the nation some forty thousand of her bravest sons, and was followed by a reign of terror and cruel confiscations. Then came the jealousies between the great family of Neville, with Warwick at their head, and Edward's new favourites, his wife's relations, the Woodvilles. On this followed that surprising caprice of fortune, which, within a few months, reconciled Warwick and Margaret, and drove out Edward as a penniless exile; and then restored him with more power than ever, by the great victories of Barnet and Tewkesbury. After this, we have Edward's alliance with his brother-in-law, Charles, the rash duke of Burgundy, and his invasion of France in 1475, when he became a pensioner of the wily Louis XI.; as a successor, of somewhat similar character, Charles II., became, two hundred years later, the pensioner of Louis XIV.

In the midst of these dismal annals, there is some relief to be found in the energy and magnanimity of

Warwick, in the pluck and good generalship of Edward, and in the unconquerable spirit of Queen Margaret. The chroniclers too, as well as Shakespeare, Scott, Bulwer Lytton, and Charles Reade, have done their best to cheer this sad page of history with the brighter colours of romance. Moreover, the growing trade of the country was scarcely affected by the civil war; and even the progress of learning was not seriously hindered. English prose was beginning to assume a modern form in the treatises of Sir John Fortescue, the tutor of Margaret's unfortunate son Prince Edward, and in the *Morte d'Arthur* of Sir Thomas Malory, which was finished in 1470. By 1477 Caxton had established his printing press in Westminster, and was warmly supported by Edward IV., his brothers and his courtiers. In spite of the prohibition of Bishop Grandisson\* and other devout churchmen, miracle plays were continually performed in the churches, and were slowly preparing the way for the Elizabethan drama. Meanwhile, abroad, at peace in the midst of turmoil, Thomas à Kempis had been studying to imitate Christ in his German cloister; and in 1479 the future greatness of Spain was secured by the union of Arragon and Castile, in the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella.

Edward IV. was a great benefactor of our abbey as Edward II. had been, and probably, for the same reason, loans of money in his time of need. In 1464 the king bestowed upon the abbot and convent of Tavistock the priory of Cowick by Exeter; and, perhaps, it was in consequence of this that Abbot Richard rebuilt the "Bere Inne," the city house of

\* OLIVER, p. 261.

the abbots of Tavistock, in South Street, Exeter, which seems to have belonged to the abbey before the Norman Conquest.

The priory of St. Andrew's, Cowick, stood by the Exe, and often suffered grievously from its inundations. At first,\* soon after the Conquest, the manors of Cowick and Exwick were given to the great Benedictine abbey of Bec, in Normandy. The giver was William son of Baldwin, and this Baldwin was most likely Baldwin de Brion, who fought under William I. at Hastings, and received the barony of Okehampton, and built the castle of Exeter. Afterwards a priory was established, and Cowick became a cell of the great Norman abbey. Consequently, in later times, when Normandy was lost to us, and we were at war with France, Cowick was regarded as the enemy's land and its revenues were confiscated to the crown.

Up to 1261 the people of Cowick had no spiritual ministrations apart from the priory. In October of that year, owing to the increase of population, a chapel, dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury, was built for their use at the end of Exe Bridge, and a vicar, one Henry, was appointed to serve it. But, owing to the small income of the priory and its noble hospitality, Bishop Bronescombe only required it to provide the vicar with a decent manse and five marks (*i.e.* £3 6s. 8d.) a year. With such a pittance as this, let us hope that the vicar was often allowed to share the "noble hospitality" of his patrons. The chapel, with the bridge, was swept away early in the fifteenth century; and in 1412 Bishop Stafford con-

\* OLIVER, p. 153, *seq.*



secrated a church in Pinhay to take its place, with a cemetery adjoining it.

The Courtenays inherited, with the other duties and privileges of the barons of Okehampton and earls of Devon, the position of benefactors of Cowick; so that they came to be looked upon as its founders and patrons. Hugh, Lord Courtenay, baron of Okehampton, was buried in the church of the priory in 1291, and his wife, the Lady Alianora, in 1328. Their daughter-in-law (Agnes) was also buried there in 1340; and on this occasion her husband, who was also called Hugh, and had been created earl of Devon in 1335, gave splendid presents for religious purposes, viz., one hundred marks towards the rebuilding of Exeter cathedral, and the same amount to Bishop Grandisson's new college at Ottery; twenty marks to every abbey in Devon, and also to the priory at Plympton; ten marks to every other priory in the county, and five marks to every convent of friars. On the 5th of February following, Earl Hugh was laid beside his wife. The burial was performed with most elaborate ceremony, and there were present, amongst others, Bishops Grandisson of Exeter and Wyvill of Salisbury, Sir John de Raleghe, Sir Thomas Courtenay, and Sir John Luterell, as well as the abbots of Sherborne, Torre, and Buckland. Where was John de Courtenay, abbot of Tavistock? According to Oliver\* he was the earl's elder brother, and survived him nine years, and with all his fondness for field sports, he could hardly have been hunting on such an occasion as this. The magnificent Grandisson preached a funeral sermon, first in Latin, then in

\* Additional supplement, p. 13.

French, on 1 Chronicles xxix. 28, "He died in a good old age, full of days and riches and honour." The Latin must have been for the clergy, and the French for the gentry. As for the poor, at least their bodily comforts were not forgotten; for we are told that a good entertainment was provided for all comers, and that the poor were taken special care of. We must remember that it was not till twenty-two years later than this, in the year 1362, that pleadings in court were ordered to be in English instead of French.

In 1371, under Prior John Perfit,\* an official return gives us the following valuations: The church of Cowick, with the chapel of St. Thomas, twelve marks; the church of Spreyton, five pounds; the church of Chrystow, ten marks; the church of Okehampton, twelve marks; a part of the annual value of the church of Sampford Courtenay, five shillings; an annual payment from Whympel Courtenay, two marks.

Under the next prior, Robert de Glanvilla, 1376, there was an ordination held in the priory church by William Courtenay, bishop of London; and amongst those ordained was a Hugo de Courtenay. This bishop William was a son of Hugh Courtenay, earl of Devon. He was bishop of Hereford (in his 28th year) from 1370 to 1375; bishop of London from 1375 to 1381; he was made cardinal in 1378, and was archbishop of Canterbury from 1381 to 1396.

In 1440 Henry VI. restored to the priory all its property and privileges. But in 1451 the prior, Robert de Rouen, of Becdenne, gave up his convent

\* OLIVER, p. 154.

to the king; and Henry VI. assigned its revenues to his new and noble foundation of Eton. The prior was, probably, influenced by Thomas Courtenay, earl of Devon, who was a great benefactor of Eton. His action, and that of the devout king, show clearly the growing tendency to endow learning rather than piety; and thus foreshadow the greater changes under Henry VIII.

Eton, however, was not long to enjoy the revenues of Cowick; for, thirteen years later, in 1464, Edward IV., in return, as we have surmised, for benefits received, bestowed the priory upon the abbey of Tavistock.

Being thenceforth, until the suppression, 1539, a cell of Tavistock, the priory had its services maintained by a few monks sent there from our abbey, and was presided over by a superior appointed by the same authority. The property thus conveyed to the abbey included, besides that given above, the manors of Cowick, Exwick, and Christow, the chapel of St. Mary at Sticklepath, and an annual payment from Meeth.

With the other possessions of the abbey, Cowick priory, with all its belongings, was granted by Henry VIII. to John, Lord Russell in July, 1539. But, within a century, most of the land in St. Thomas' parish had been alienated to meet the cost of what Oliver rightly calls, "that princely undertaking, the great Bedford Level." This was no less than the turning of 400,000 acres of morass, all round the Wash, into good farm land by a gigantic system of drainage. It was begun by Francis, earl of Bedford, in 1634, and finished by Earl William about 1660.

We may rejoice that the money raised on the Cowick property was turned to such good account ; but we cannot but regret that not a vestige is left of the priory church or of the Courtenay monuments that once adorned it.

## CHAPTER XI.

### *ABBOT JOHN AND SELECTIONS FROM EARLY PARISH ACCOUNTS.*

WE only know there was an Abbot John of Tavistock, about this time, because his name occurs as plaintiff in an action of the first year of Richard III., that is, between June 1483 and June 1484. His name is not given in Oliver's *Monasticon*. He was succeeded by Richard Yerne in 1491.

Abbot John, therefore, witnessed the close of the long tragedy of the wars of the Roses in the most tragic scenes of all—the murder of the young princes in the Tower, 1483, and the heroic death of Richard III. on the field of Bosworth in 1485. What shall we say of Richard's successor? Henry VII.\* had been trained in adversity, and, like William III., he was too grave and too reticent and self-contained to win popular regard. But he was a very able man, a truly wise statesman, and just the kind of ruler that England needed at this time. For, like the other Tudors, he was his own prime minister, though he took care that his advisers should bear the responsibility of his acts. Bacon regards him as our greatest lawmaker after Edward I. Without severity he put

\* See GAIRDNER'S *Henry VII.*, p. 209.

down every vestige of rebellion. He secured peace and encouraged commerce, and made England respected enough to be the arbiter in foreign disputes. Though grave, he could be humorous; and though careful, he could spend magnificently, as his chapel at Westminster shows.

But let us descend from public affairs to the lowly records of our churchwardens' accounts. Many points of interest come under the heads of receipts and expenses. In 1385-6, our earliest account, the cost for wax and tallow is £3 4s. 10d., or about £60 of our present money. We have also several charges for mending windows, and 1s. for making three figures in the vestry window. Two and twopence is paid for five yards of linen-cloth for a rochet, a very short surplice, or cotta, found then in most parish churches. In 1539 we read of 7s. 6d. paid for a cope; and the year following of mending a surplice and of new girdles for the albs. In this year, 1386, we have a penny paid for buckram for the repair of vestments; and this word "vestment" meant the chasuble with stole and maniple. The inventory of church goods for 1561-2 gives a pair of red silk vestments, a pair of white damask vestments (tunics) for deacon and sub-deacon, a suit of vestments of yellow silk, and one white cope of satin of Bruges. These were the vestments used under Queen Mary. Already the new order has begun; and this same account, 1561-2, tells us of so much paid for the articles (the 39), and for Her Majesty's injunctions; of 1s. 3d. for a pair of gloves for Mr. Vicar, of 15s. for a paraphrase of Erasmus, of £1 5s. 8d. for a Bible of the largest volume; and now, and henceforth, as far as vestments

are concerned, we only pay for the purchase, mending, and washing, of surplices.

From the first, there are repeated charges for gathering rushes for St. John the Baptist's day; perhaps a reminder of his preaching on the banks of the Jordan. In 1400, we have 6d. entered for the keeping of a bullock through the winter; and in 1406 the warden had in his store twelve wethers, one ram, one ewe, and one lamb. In 1402, 1s. 4d. is paid for a nuptial veil, which every church in the diocese had been ordered to provide by the council of Exeter, held in 1287. This same year, 3s. 6d. was paid for binding books; and £4 14s. 4d. for a new missal. In 1424 and 1426 we read of bonfires in the cemetery of the church on the feast of the Assumption. After the Reformation, charges for bonfires are confined to the 29th of May and the 5th of November; the charge being 1s. "for a seam of wood for the bunfire."

The account for 1471 gives receipts for tolling the bell and carrying the cross, on the death of Nicholas Weryng, John Myschell, John Snowdon, John Drake, and others, and also for torches on the death of John Calegan. Moreover, we have the rents of assize, *i.e.*, the fixed rents due to the church (as again in 1535 and 1586); and a distinction is made between the store of the church and the store of St. Eustachius, the latter being probably for the special service of the altar of St. Eustachius. Here also the "bedeman"\* is paid eight pence for keeping the bell, and the "almsman" a penny for going about the town; whilst to the mayor of the borough of Tavistock (majori Burgi de Tavystoke) is paid 4s. 4d. for chief rent.

\* A man in receipt of alms on condition of praying for the founder.

From the earliest accounts we have payments of pence made for the various altars, *e.g.*, of St. Eustachius, St. Katherine, St. Blaise, St. John the Baptist, the Holy Trinity, St. George, and St. Saviour. We have also gifts to the vicar at the anniversaries of the deaths of certain persons, who were benefactors of the church, or were for some special reason to be remembered. The number of these grows very rapidly. In 1386 there are payments to Sir Simon, the vicar, for the anniversaries of John Cullyng and Sormunda his wife, Robert Wodemaniswylle, Richard Lamborne (Lumburn), Roger Trelauni (Trelawny), and Walter Popleston, the charge being 6d., *i.e.* one penny for each. By 1426 there are added to these John Glaucestre and Margaret his wife, Walter Soule and Mariota his wife, John Honte and Christina his wife, John Russell and Sabina his wife, Ranulph Honte and Idonia his wife, Galfridus Talant and Olive his wife, Richard Tope and his two wives Isabel and Margaret, Richard Marschall and Tolewna his wife, Eustace Byre and Amicia his wife, William Beamont and Alicia his wife, Reginald Strepe and Christina his wife, John Wynd and Joan his wife, and eleven others. In 1471 we have most of these names repeated, though some are much altered, *e.g.*, Cullyng has become Collyns; Honte, Hunta; Talant, Tallond; and there are added to them the names of John Lymescote, John Wyndowte and Joan his wife, Walter Lanskarfford and Thomasina his wife, William Coryton and Agnes his wife, Thomas Hulet and Sarra (Sarah) his wife, Richard Hulet and his two wives Joan and Alicia, Robert Marchell, Christina his daughter and his wife, Roger Heddon



and Emmota his wife, Walter Abel and his wives Joan and Elizabeth, John atte Wylle, John the hermit, John Brun (Brown) and Joan his wife, Paschall Mychell and Joan his wife, and John Gerard. Often money was left to feed a certain number of the poor at these anniversaries ; so under 1426-7 we have, bread bought for the exequies annually celebrated for the anniversaries of the benefactors of the church, sixpence ; seven flagons of ale bought for the said exequies, ten pence. There must have been something very helpful to faith and love and hope in relations being thus remembered together, year after year, in the prayers of the church of the parish in which they had lived and died.

The next warden's account after 1470-71 is of the year 1538-9, *i.e.*, sixty-eight years later. This was the year of the Dissolution, and the church was setting itself in order in prospect of the coming of the "king's visitors." Consequently much is done in the way of cleaning and repairing, *e.g.*, paid to Lang, the "helier" and his man for three days' "helynge" upon the church, meat and drink, 4s. 1d. ; to John Glanfyld for a peck of "helyng pynnes," 5d. ; to John Fisher for taking down the "olde argons" (organ), 2d. ; for blowing of the "newe argons," 1d. ; for taking down the glass window and setting up the straw (screens of straw to keep out the wind and rain for the time) in the same, 8d. ; for carrying "skoole" (rubbish) out of the church, 2d. ; for cleaning the glass of the church against Easter, 5d. ; to Alsen Smale for scouring the three chandeliers and the lamp, 5d. ; for a new altar cloth for St. John's "gild" (aisle or chapel), 1s. 3d. ; for mending the lock of the coffer

that "kepith synggying bredd" (*i.e.*, held the wafer bread), 1d.; for carrying bones and stones out of the churchyard, 2d. Evidently the fear of a visitation may have wholesome consequences.

In the same account we have "for redyne of the lake, 4d," *i.e.*, for clearing the rubbish from the stream that ran through the town, and was apt to get choked where a bridge crossed it, over against the Church-bow, or opposite St. Matthew's chapel. So, under 1574-5, there is paid for "rydinge the brydge before the almehouse and at the churchebowe, 3d."; and a nearly similar entry under 1561-2. In this same account, 1538-9, there is paid to "Sr John Jhesus priste for his yeres Waigs vj<sup>li</sup>," *i.e.*, the priest of the altar of St. Saviour in the "Jhesus yelde," guild or aisle; for reading the Passion on Palm-Sunday, 2d.; to the sexton a year's wages, 10s.; to Mery the organ-player, by commandment of the parish, 10s.; to Mr. May for the exchange of a cope in the abbey, 7s. 6d.

Under 1540 we see a difference at once; instead of any reference to the abbey we have a payment of 2s. 6d. to John Badge, my Lord Russell's "bayly." Here we have also 15s. paid to Richard Peke for nine months' wages for the sextonship; 1s. 8d. to Ralph Hookyng, for keeping the clock and chimes for one year; and 9s. 8d. to the "portereve" of Tavistock, for rent.

Under 1545 Domina Montjoye, *i.e.*, Lady Dorothy Mountjoy, pays for an anniversary. In 1540 she had obtained a licence for a chapel within the precincts of the abbey.

In 1552-3, the last year of Edward VI., we have

13s. paid for the "Communion boke," and 4s. for "pryck song boks"; *i.e.*, books with the music for service. Showing that the choral service was still kept up. Here for the first time the school appears as a charge on the parish. No doubt the abbey had provided for it until the Dissolution. And, as we have seen, in 1552 the market dues were given up to the town for this and other parish purposes. In this year, therefore, the warden, rightly enough now styled "of the parish," pays 6s. 8d. to the glazier for the south window in the school-house. So in 1556 we find a charge for making the schoolmaster's bedstead; and in the same direction we have the warden paying 6s. 8d. to John Cornish for what he laid out in paving the east bridge. Here also we have many expenses for the restoration of the old order under Philip and Mary; *e.g.*, for frankincense, 4d.; to Anthony Skeret for an albe, 4s. 4d.; for garnishing the same, 1s. 8d.; for "iiij yeardes of Clothe to make too Rocchettes Witheall," 2s. 4d.; to Mr. Counstable for an altar-cloth, and for making, 2s. 4d.; to the same for a mass book, 14s.; paid to Alse Smale for making clean two great candlesticks, 4d.; to George Maye for a planck to mend the cross for the rood, 1s. 10d.; to Mr. Callmadye and William Grylls for recovering the church lands (the rent of which was £17 14s.), £23 11s. 4d. Twenty-seven shillings and sevenpence is also paid to Edwarde Denys, because he was not fully satisfied and paid when he was churchwarden.

This brings down our wardens' account to the firm establishment of the Reformation amongst us under Queen Elizabeth.

## CHAPTER XII.

*ABBOT RICHARD YERNE, AND MORE SELECTIONS.*

RICHARD YERNE had the temporalities of the abbey restored to him 25th of March, 1491. As we do not know when Abbot John died, they may have been seized by the crown during a temporary vacancy. Richard Yerne only held rule here for about a year, being succeeded in 1492 by Richard Banham.

Can the frequent occurrence of the name Richard at this time have been due to the popularity of Richard, duke of York? In our own time, owing to a similar cause, there are many more Victorias in England than ever before.

This year, 1492, witnessed the expulsion of the Moors from Spain, which closed the long series of struggles and reprisals that had been going on in the Peninsula ever since the victory of Muca in 713. In 1492, also, took place the election of the very worst of the popes, Alexander VI., the infamous Borgia; and in the same year there came to Europe the revelation of a new world, in the discovery of Cuba and Hispaniola by Christopher Columbus.

At home we were quietly settling down under the new order of things, rightly enough associated with the Tudor dynasty. Fierce and bloody as the civil war had been, it did not interfere with the general prosperity of the country. As Philippe de Commines said, from actual observation, the mischief of the war fell on those who made it. But the results of these wars were great and enduring; for the destruction of

the feudal aristocracy and their retainers swept away what was then the only sufficient barrier to the usurpations of the crown. The commercial classes wanted peace at any price, and dreaded the violence of the mob more than that of the court. This last fear the church shared with them. For the church, owing to its own corruptions and its cruel persecution of the Lollards, had grown thoroughly unpopular, and, with this loss of influence, was forgetting its earlier traditions as the champion of liberty, and becoming, in its fear of the people, a staunch supporter of an absolute monarchy. This "new monarchy," as Mr. Green\* well calls it, with its hateful adjuncts of spies, torture, forced loans, and judicial murders, owed its conception to the genius of Edward IV. Richard III., wishing, perhaps, to hide private offences under public benefits, posed as the restorer of the constitution, and, working with parliament, condemned "benevolences," as the forced loans were called, and passed many good laws. But the system of absolute monarchy begun by Edward IV. was carefully developed by the statecraft of Henry VII.

Neither Edward nor Henry often troubled parliament to meet. Why should they, when they needed no grants of money, and the royal council was usurping all the judicial and legislative authority of parliament?

Under Henry VIII. the attack upon liberty was more dangerous, because it was made under the forms of the constitution. With a new aristocracy largely indebted to court favour, with the commons longing only for peace, and too weak as yet to stand

\* *History of English People*, chap. vi. sec. 3.

alone, Henry saw no reason to be afraid of parliament. So he summoned it frequently, and used it for his own ends. It simply endorsed his wishes, and became the ready instrument of his capricious despotism; and thus the people were made the spoilers of their own liberties.

In fact, with the close of the Wars of the Roses, the constitutional freedom which had been developing steadily for three hundred years was suddenly and completely arrested for more than a century, only to be recovered after the long struggle with the Stuarts. No doubt our liberties needed a new and broader basis if they were to be thorough and permanent. But it is well to remember how long those liberties were in jeopardy before they were quietly and firmly established in 1688. Such remembrance should make us very thankful on our own account and very considerate for any less-favoured people.

Again, we must drop from affairs of state to examine a few more of our local records as they have come down to us in our churchwardens' accounts.

Under 1561-2, besides the articles, injunctions, and Bible already referred to, we have such charges as these: for the ten commandments and a calendar 2s.; for two psalters 6d.; for cutting down nettles in the churchyard 2d.; paid to the Queen's Majesty's players 13s. 4d., and for the exchange of the same money 10d., the payment being made presumably in the old debased coin, the calling in of which was one of the greatest boons for which England cherished the memory of Elizabeth.\*

\* It is mentioned on her tomb. *Annals of England*, vol. ii. p. 270.

In 1566-7, amongst various charges for funerals, we have Roger Wood for pall and bells 1s.; William Browne for bells 8d.; John Vynton and others for the great bell 4d. Under receipts we have "le Sundayes pence 8s. 8d."; and, for the maintenance of the church, received of the parishioners (probably by a church rate), £8 6s. 6d.; also for the market-houses and fairs this year £14; the earls of Bedford having given up these dues from 1552, for two hundred years, for such general parish purposes as the support of the church, school, almshouse, and bridges. The wardens would seem to have been in some way responsible for those dues at this time; though it is likely that their responsibility was shared by the "eight men," or town governors, who are in fact referred to in the account for 1555-6. Under this year, 1566-7, we have the first charge, £1, for "taking of foxes." There are charges also for mustering the soldiers; several entries relating to the school-house and the master; and many shillings are spent on setting up in glass the arms of the Queen, my lord of Bedford, and Master Fytz. Almost the only charge directly connected with the church is 4d. paid to Robert Horsewyll for mending a surplice. Under 1573-4 we find this entry: "Geven John Williams by Comaundem<sup>t</sup> of the viii men towards his paynes ffor Rynggyng in the mornyng att iiij of Clocke iii<sup>s</sup> iiiij<sup>d</sup>." A shilling is given to a "Skoler of Oxford"; 6s. 4d. for dinner for my lord bishop's servants; 1s. for a friese gown for the "bedman." There are several entries about new seats (segges), and John Browne is paid 1s. for his labour about certain pillars of "morestones" (granite or elvan) in



setting the new seats in the church. Under the same year, besides payment to the vicar for teaching the scholars already referred to, we have many gifts to persons "gathering," *i.e.* collecting, alms for various places—*e.g.* given to one that "gathered" for Wadebridge 8d.; to one other for the lazar house\* of Pilton 4d.; to one of Brixton, his house being "brent," 6d.; to one that "gathered" to the lazar house of Honiton 6d.; "item to one that gathered to the king's bench prison 6d." Then we have, "paid William Huggyn for newmaking the desk 2s." These gifts to the old lazar houses suggest that they had been turned into poor-houses, to meet the wants of the multitude of paupers and vagrants thrown upon the country by the dissolution of the monasteries.

In 1574 the wardens received 40s. for wood growing in St. Saviour's meadow. £6 2s. 8d. was subscribed for making and setting up the new bells and chimes. What became of these when the present peal was given by John duke of Bedford in 1769? Eightpence is paid for mending the "leache" [lich] bell. John Courtys is paid 4d. for whipping dogs out of the church; and, a relic of former times, 1s. 6d. is given to three pardoners at several times.

In 1588-9 Mr. Bickell, Mr. Batteshill, Mr. Knight, and others are paid 9s. 8d. for preaching in the parish church. Itinerant licensed preachers were then needed, presumably because, as the preface to the Homilies puts it, "all they which are appointed ministers have not the gift of preaching sufficiently to instruct the people which is committed unto them." This is true still, and is largely answerable for the

\* See book iii., chapter 5.

success of Methodism. Under this year, we have also 3s. 2d. charged for the fastening of the Bible, the *Paraphrase* of Erasmus, and Mr. Jewell's book, in the church. The Bible is lost, so is the fastening of Jewell's works; but the *Paraphrase*, though very dilapidated, still retains its original boards and chain. One shilling is paid for the dinner of the wardens and one sidesman at the delivery of the presentments at the last visitation.

In 1594-5, under the burials charged, we have the names of Francis and William Drake, William Browne, Joan Soper, and William Rundell. We find also this entry, Paid "for a prayer booke which was Redd in the churche after the goyng fourth of the fleete, iij<sup>d</sup>." This was simply a special form of prayer, either for the attack upon Brest in 1594, in which Sir Martin Frobisher lost his life, or for the last and fatal expedition of that chief glory of Tavistock, Sir Francis Drake, with Sir John Hawkins, to the West Indies in 1595, in which expedition both these brave captains perished.

In 1605-6, under receipts for interments, we meet with the names of Matthew and Robert Edgcombe, Francis Drake, William Truscott, John Cudlipp, Peter Sleeman, John Wonnacott, and Margaret Crocker. In the same year, eight shillings is paid for the charges of the wardens and *sidesmen* at the Visitation at Plympton. Twenty-pence is paid for the removal of the "Rubble" (earlier "Skoole") from the higher market-house and from the church bridge; *i.e.*, no doubt, the bridge at the Church-bow. Christopher Cocke is paid for keeping clean the church armour, 8d. And we have also an

incomplete and mysterious entry to this effect, "Itm paid to Mr. Thomas Mohun the Earle of Bedfords hundred Bayleif . . . in hurdewyke Court sett upon the parishners for that they offende the statute in not wearinge Capps on the Sondaie iij<sup>s</sup> iij<sup>d</sup>."

In 1628 we find paid for rent for St. John's (chapel), 1s. ; paid Mr. T. Edgcombe for a rate imposed upon the tynners, 2s. Did the town succeed to some of the rights of the abbots over the neighbouring mines, or was this merely a church rate which the miners tried to resist? There is also charged for a "but" (hassock) and a mat for the pulpit, 4d. ; for a distressed poor man which came from Ireland, and was spoiled by pirates, 3d. ; paid John Stephens, by order from Mr. John Rowe, for a soldier imprest at Horrabridge, 3s. 4d. ; to an Irish gentleman and his wife, by order from Mr. Willesford, 6d. ; paid Mr. Cole and Mr. Maynard for Christmas quarter, £4. We are not told for what this payment was made.

In 1629-30 Paul Martyn is paid 4s. "for keepinge of the doggs out of the church for one whole yere" ; Raphe Peeke (also written Pike), one of the wardens, is presented and excommunicated for not making the door in the churchyard. There is a charge of 3s. for the ringers "that did ringe at the comynge of my Lord Bishopp" ; also "for a pottle of burnt sacke to bestowe uppon my Lord Bishopp iij<sup>s</sup>." In the same account we have, "paid for two quartts of wine for the preacher w<sup>ch</sup> lay at Walter Godbeares ij<sup>s</sup>." Evidently neither bishop nor priest were teetotallers.

Under 1684 we have to Will Worth for coming with the "Deane Ruler" (Rural) to view the church, 1s. Then there are these enormous quantities of

wine for the sacrament : at Michaelmas eight quarts, at Christmas twelve quarts, and at Easter thirty-six quarts. No wonder successive wardens found it necessary to provide those large pewter flagons which now stand at the north-east corner of the chancel. One entry reminds us of the nearest approach to the blizzard of March, 1891, of which we have any record, the great snowstorm so vividly described in that delightful romance *Lorna Doone*. The entry is, "Paid William Ward and the old Hugh for clensing the Church After the great snow, 3<sup>s</sup>."

We have now reached the time when books take the place of separate sheets. Besides many books of accounts from 1697, we have others containing reports of vestries and parish business, with some omissions, from 1655. The three earliest of these valuable books of reports were mislaid till quite lately. The first, with entries from 1655, was found with our earlier records in 1886; the second, reaching from 1734 to 1802, was purchased from private hands in 1885; and the third found its place once more amongst our vestry archives in 1890.

These reports, supplemented from our church registers, which are complete from 1614, would furnish much material for local history from 1650. The following are samples. From the first book we learn that in 1660 the masters of the town agreed to meet in the church on the first Monday of every month, to consult about the business of the parish; also, that the wardens in 1673 had in hand £95 14s. 2d. of the parish stock, to be lent out to poor\* artificers; that

\* See the reflections of Thomas Larkham on the abuse of the parish stock, in the first Supplementary Chapter.

in 1678, by the consent of the masters and other inhabitants, this stock was raised to £100; but that by 1693, when we last read of it, it had fallen to £5 13s. 7¼d. The second volume, amongst many other interesting things, tells us of the establishment of a *parochial* Sunday-school in 1789, under the auspices of good vicar Jago, to be supported by *rates* as well as subscriptions, and to be managed by the vestry. The third volume often gives the list of the recipients of the Ford Street Charity; and many people think that some such public notification would not be amiss at the present day. Under the year 1814 it tells us that Mr. Gill, the governor, was directed to read prayers to the poor persons in the workhouse, mornings and evenings. This also, in the absence of a chaplain, is an example that might still be followed with advantage to all concerned. Under date 25th of March, 1825, this volume contains the letters long missed, in which John, duke of Bedford, most courteously insists upon paying the salary of the organist of the parish church, and keeping the organ in repair, "as a proof of his attachment to the town, and his anxious desire to cultivate the goodwill and promote the harmony of every individual connected with it."

Here we must stop, having indicated a promising mine of valuable information to future adventurers.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*ABBOT RICHARD BANHAM, AND WHAT HE GAINED  
FROM HENRY VIII. AND LEO X.*

RICHARD BANHAM was abbot from 1492 to 1523.

Already the system of policy, answering to the modern balance of power, had been begun by those astute monarchs Louis XI. of France, Ferdinand of Spain, and our Henry VII. The new order of things in the political world of Europe was associated with Charles VIII.'s invasion of Italy in 1494, and the religious reformation began with the burning of Savonarola in 1498, and more definitely with Leo X.'s condemnation of Luther in 1518.

Meanwhile, the mental activity awakened by the revival of the study of Greek, and stimulated by the wonderful discoveries of Columbus and the maritime adventures of the Portuguese, was developing a sort of pagan culture around Lorenzo de Medici at Florence, and a combination of culture with earnest and liberal Christian thought in the great Erasmus and in our own Colet and Thomas More. Henry VII. was too absorbed in his subtle and rather mean statecraft to care much for the new learning. But it flourished under the enlightened support of Archbishop Warham; and from 1509 it was further encouraged by the clerkly young king Henry VIII., and his magnificent friend Thomas Wolsey.

Our abbot, Richard Banham, seems to have shared the big thoughts that were floating about in his time.

At all events he was very ambitious. He managed to secure the privileges of a mitred abbot in 1513, as Baron Hurdwick; and, after a long struggle with the bishop of Exeter, he contrived to get from the pope, Leo X., in 1517, a bull of total exemption from episcopal visitation.

The grant of Henry VIII., which made our abbot one of the lords spiritual, with a seat in parliament, was, according to Sir Edward Coke,\* a stretch of prerogative. It runs thus: "Be it known that for certain special reasons, and on account of the great devotion which we have and maintain towards the blessed Virgin Mary, mother of Christ, and Saint Rumon, in whose honour the abbey of Tavystoke has been dedicated from its foundation, by our noble ancestors the former kings of England, we, of our special grace and of our own certain knowledge and motion, do will that this our abbey enjoy the honour, privilege, and liberties of the spiritual lords of our parliament. We, therefore, grant, for ourselves and our successors, as far as in us lies, to our beloved in Christ, Richard Banham, abbot of Tavystoke, and his successors, that while each is abbot there, he may and shall be one of the spiritual and religious lords of our parliament, enjoying the honours, privileges, and liberties of the same. And, moreover, of our more bounteous (*uberius*) favour, and aiming at the good of our said monastery, in consideration of its distance, if it should happen that any abbot should be absent for the good of the monastery, and should not come to our parliament, that absence we have herewith pardoned to any such abbot; but he is to pay through his

\* OLIVER, *Monasticon*, p. 92.



attorney into our treasury five marks every time for his absence from parliament."

This plentiful forgiveness followed by the exaction of a considerable penalty is very Tudor-like; and it must impress us with a sense of the great and rapid changes then going on in thought and life, to remember that, when these privileges had been enjoyed barely twenty-six years, this same devout and gracious Henry had so completely lost his old reverence for St. Mary and St. Rumon and the foundation of his ancestors, that he broke up the establishment for which he had professed so much regard and handed over its revenues to secular uses.

It will increase our notion of the dignity secured by Richard Banham to remember that these parliamentary abbots were only twenty-nine, when the religious houses numbered more than a thousand. They took rank by the date of their appointment.

In the same year, 1513, Banham was in the thick of the fight with his diocesan. In 1505 Bishop Oldham had made his visitation of the abbey, and no objection was made. In April, 1513, our abbot was cited before the bishop's commissary for contempt of the bishop's authority. The appeal to Rome which he produced was declared frivolous and inadmissible. He was first suspended and then excommunicated. But on his appearing at Exeter on May 10th, and humbly asking forgiveness, the bishop absolved him, Banham having first taken the oath of submission to the see of Exeter.

This was only a truce, however, for, in the following February, our abbot appealed to Archbishop Warham

and the bishop of London, admitting that the abbey had submitted to episcopal visitation, but alleging that this was due to the carelessness of the abbots, who had neglected their privileges. Both the abbot and Bishop Oldham promised by their priestly word to abide by the decision of the referees. Their decision was that the abbot had failed to prove that his monastery was exempt, either by prescription or by papal authority, from episcopal jurisdiction, and that he must submit and obey his bishop, as his predecessors had done. On the other hand, they required Bishop Oldham to withdraw his censures within eight days, in the private chapel of his palace in London, and to treat the abbot and convent with fatherly kindness. Each party was to pay his own expenses, which seems to imply that there was fault on both sides, and that, if Banham was insubordinate, Oldham was overbearing. The decision was given in the bishop of Exeter's house, near Temple Bar, 8th February, 1513-4.

In spite of his promise, our abbot would not submit. He made the appeal to Rome, which he had threatened from the first; and in 1517 he secured from Leo X. a bull of such absolute exemption and liberty as must have seemed to him an ample reward for all his efforts. This bull exempts the abbey and all its dependencies from episcopal and archi-episcopal control or visitation, taking them under the immediate protection of the see of St. Peter. All suspensions or excommunications pronounced against them by any other authority are to be regarded as null and void. As a slight recognition of this generous treatment, the abbots of Tavistock are to pay

annually to the apostolic chamber, on the feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, half an ounce of gold, that is twenty shillings of English money, but this included the three golden pieces, due from the time of Pope Celestine III., 1193, in return for his bull of exemption and confirmation.\* Whoever shall infringe any of these privileges will incur the anger of Almighty God and His apostles St. Peter and St. Paul. The bull is dated from St. Peter's at Rome, which was then rebuilding under the eye of Michael Angelo, at the cost of the wide-spread indulgences which aroused the wrath of Luther, and so proved to be the spark which was to kindle the great fire of the Reformation.

Richard Banham only lived to enjoy his hard-won independence for five years; but the exemption was recognised by Bishop Veysey in 1525.†

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *JOHN PERYN, AND THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES.*

WHEN John Peryn received the temporalities of our monastery in December, 1523, it could hardly have seemed to him possible that he was to be the last abbot of Tavistock. It was true that Luther was making a great disturbance in Germany, and that the attempt to settle matters at the Diet of Worms (1521) only seemed likely to lead to revolution. But here in England Henry VIII. had written a book

\* See book ii., chapter 13.

† OLIVER, *ut supra*, pp. 92 and 103.

against the heresy of Luther (1521), and received the title of Defender of the Faith from Pope Leo X. "in recognition of his good service"; and even now, in this year 1523, convocation had made a grant to the king of half the revenues of the church as a proof of their gratitude for this his attack upon Luther. So Abbot Peryn began his rule here in peace and quietness, and busied himself about local affairs, as his predecessors had done before him.

Dugdale says that "in 1525 he entered into a composition with the bishop of Exeter concerning jurisdiction"; but in several leases\* he claims the full privilege of independence secured by Richard Banham, and styles himself "the abbot of the exempt monastery of the blessed Mary and St. Rumon of Tavistock." On 30th June, 1523, he granted a pension of five marks, £3 16s. 8d., charged on the manor of Hurdwick, as sheriff's aid, to Henry Courtenay, earl of Devon, who was afterwards created marquis of Exeter, but executed in 1539 for complicity with Cardinal Pole.

In 1526 the abbey was ordered† to supply John Amadas, a servant of the king, with a corrody; and as John Amadas simply took the place of Henry Caleis, a former nominee of the crown, this was evidently nothing more than the exercise of an established right. The corrody consisted of "one white loaf, another loaf called Trequarter, a dish called General, another dish of flesh or fish called Pitance, and three potells of beer, or three silver halfpence, daily; also a furred robe at Christmas

\* OLIVER, p. 92.

† *Ibid.*, p. 92, and p. vi. in the preface.

yearly, of the same kind as that of our esquires, or the sum of 20s." When staying at the abbey this pensioner was to have a suitable chamber and stabling for one horse; he was also to be provided with three candles called "Paris candells," with a fire in his chamber, and hay for his horse, "such as one of our esquires receives."

In September,\* 1529, the abbot and convent granted to John Elyott a yearly stipend of £3 6s. 8d., with meat and drink; viz., "a convent pastloff and a quart of ale, with candles in winter time, and also four wainloads of fuel to be carried to his house, and one robe yearly. In return for all this, Elyott bound himself to serve at the masses and antiphons in the chapel of St. Mary, *i.e.*, the lady chapel, and at the organ and the singing in the choir of the abbey church; and he was, also, to instruct five boys, as well as he possibly could (*meliori modo quo poterit*), in the chanting of the said chapel and choir. In short, he was organist and choirmaster. Why had this work ceased to be done by the monks themselves? So, in September, 1537, John Chard, abbot of Ford, granted to William Tyler, M.A., of Axminster, £3 6s. 8d. a year, and a gown of four yards of broadcloth at 5s. a yard, besides board and lodging in the monastery, for teaching grammar to the boys of the house, and expounding the Scripture in the refectory when required. Again we ask, Could none of the brethren have performed these duties?

In October of this same year, 1529, Wolsey was disgraced, having failed to secure the pope's consent to the divorce of Catherine of Arragon. Not that

\* OLIVER, p. 92.

the pope had any objection to the divorce; but since the ruthless sack of Rome, in 1527, by the German troops of Charles V., he had not been a free agent; and the emperor Charles naturally defended the cause of his aunt, Queen Catherine. Having sacrificed Wolsey, as in turn he sacrificed all his ministers, Henry VIII. kept for two years and a half to the moderate policy of Norfolk and Sir Thomas More. But he had taken Cranmer for his adviser in church matters; and perhaps we have a suggestion of the fear of the coming storm in the further provision that, if the abbot or his successors should not reside in the monastery, Elyott was entitled to thirtepenne weekly instead of the provision aforesaid.

The next reference to our abbot is in 1535. Great changes had taken place in the interval. The parliament (1529-1536) that turned England into a national church, had begun with attacking notorious clerical abuses. It ordered all the clergy to live in their parishes, and forbade them to hold more than one living at a time. But, under the "terror," as it has been well called, of Thomas Cromwell, more violent measures soon followed. In 1531\* all the clergy were charged with a breach of the law of *præmunire* for dealing with Wolsey, who was said to have broken it by acting as cardinal. To redeem themselves they paid the king £18,000, worth at least £180,000 of our present money, and also agreed to style the king "supreme head on earth of the Church of England." Next year, 1532, benefit of clergy was

\* M. CREIGHTON'S *Tudors and the Reformation*, and SEEBOHM'S *Era of the Protestant Revolution*.

limited by parliament, the payment of firstfruits to Rome was forbidden, as well as any further gifts to monasteries; and convocation was no longer allowed to make laws for the clergy by its own authority. In 1533, all appeals to Rome were forbidden, and the divorce of Catherine was pronounced by Cranmer in his consistorial court at Dunstable.

By this time Henry had adopted the "thorough" plan suggested by Thomas Cromwell, the faithful minister of Wolsey; and by this means he was fast achieving, and with the consent of parliament too, that absolute mastery of the crown over church and state alike, which the strongest of our kings had sighed for in vain. Privately, Cromwell was a man of genial temper and simple tastes; but he had learnt lessons of policy in Italy and from *The Prince* of Machiavelli, and he went straight for his object with an utter indifference to the feelings of others that seems scarcely human.

In attacking clerical abuses, and in encouraging the study of the Scriptures, without wishing for any change of doctrine, Henry was following out his early sympathy with the Oxford reformers, Colet, Erasmus, and More. But he had parted from their position altogether in breaking with Rome. In 1534 parliament passed a more stringent law against heresy, but it also confirmed the king's title as supreme head of the church; so that, whilst Tindal and others were being persecuted as heretics, the devout Carthusians, the saintly Fisher, and Sir Thomas More, who was saint and genius too, were charged with treason, because they would not forswear themselves, and deny the spiritual supremacy



of the pope. In 1535 the Carthusians and More and Fisher were executed, and Thomas Cromwell was appointed vicar-general, *i.e.*, practically the head and manager of all the ecclesiastical affairs of the country; and his first work was the visitation of the monasteries.

The best friends of the supremacy of Rome were the religious houses, who were indebted to the popes for many privileges and exemptions. Their number had clearly outgrown the public necessity, or even the public welfare. Certainly too much of the land and wealth of the country was tied up in these religious corporations; and some of the houses had fallen into idle ways. A visitation of them had been undertaken by Archbishop Morton in Henry VII.'s time by the order of the pope himself, Innocent VIII., and the report had not been satisfactory. Wolsey, the faithful adherent of Rome, had gone further, and actually suppressed some small houses, using their revenues for his school at Ipswich and his great college at Oxford; and for this he had some warrant in the appropriation of the revenues of Cowick and Modbury to his new foundation of Eton by that devout king Henry VI.

The annals and the literature of the country show plainly that both monks and friars had been losing their hold on popular regard from the middle of the fourteenth\* century. Many of the best houses were, doubtless, doing good work still, in earnest study, in relieving distress, and in spiritual ministrations. But

\* "The hopelessly corrupt and fatal times of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which led to the break-up of the sixteenth."—CHURCH'S *Oxford Movement*, p. 46.

even More and Fisher, who died for the old faith, were not averse to the partial suppression of the monasteries. Cromwell may, therefore, have fancied that he was doing no great violence to public opinion when in 1536, with the consent of parliament, he suppressed all the houses, nearly four hundred in number, of less value than £200 a year. But the North and the West were still firmly attached to the old ways, so that the "pilgrimage of grace" had to be met in 1536, and a smaller outbreak in Somerset in 1537. These risings being crushed, with a shameful mixture of treachery and cruelty, the larger houses were not likely to escape the rapacity of Henry and his courtiers, many of the latter having become, as Latimer put it, "gospellers for the abbey lands." The blow fell in the spring of 1539, when by Act of Parliament, 31 Henry VIII., c. 13, all monasteries were dissolved and granted to the king. But the blow was expected; and the wiser abbots had been, for some time, setting their houses in order, and arranging to make the best terms they could. John Peryn was one of these wise abbots; and he was busy, in these troublesome years, making provision for the future good management of the dependencies of the abbey.

In November, 1535, the abbot and the convent leased\* to John Yeo, of Hatherleigh, for thirty years, at a yearly rent of eleven pounds, the tithing sheaf of all manner of corn in Hatherleigh, and also the tithe of hay and of all other things grown in the parish. In September, 1536, they appointed\* John Amadas, and his son William, to the office of bailiff of

\* OLIVER, p. 93.

the liberty and clerk of the market of Tavistock, with a salary of thirty shillings a year. On 24th October, in the same year, the abbot appointed\* Sir Thomas Denys, knight, and his eldest son Robert, to be stewards of the manors of Cowick and Christow, with a salary of £1 6s. 8d. On 3rd May, 1537, the abbot leased to Edmund Furse, of Okehampton, the tithing sheaf of all manner of corn growing in that parish, for twenty years, at a yearly rent of £11. On 24th November, 1537, the abbot and convent granted† to Philip Williams, a tenement adjoining the Guildhall in the town of Tavistock, for twenty years, or for life, with an annuity of £1 6s. 8d.; and on 7th November, 1538, the abbot leased‡ his town house in Exeter, called the Bear Inn, for sixty years, to Edward Brygeman and Jane his wife, and their executors. The abbot may have received immediate benefits from these arrangements, in the way of fines, but it is fair to believe that he was making them also to reward good servants and to secure good management for his manors. The occasion was a tempting one, and Oliver‡ is obliged to allow that the abbot of Tor seems to have used the opportunity to provide for his own future; and the abbot of Ford for his poor relations.

As a warning to the refractory, the abbots of Woburn, Fountains, and some other houses had been hung as traitors, for being too slow in falling in with Henry's wishes. John Peryn would run no such risk. Seeing the inevitable blow descending, he anticipated

\* OLIVER, p. 156.

† *Ibid.* p. 93

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 172 and 341.

it, and calling together his twenty brethren in the chapter-house on 20th March, 1538-9, a month or so before the Act of Parliament for the suppression was passed, he surrendered his monastery with everything belonging to it — manors, churches, lands, buildings, down to books and parchments—into the hands of the king. Peryn's prudence was rewarded, for he seems to have secured fairly good terms for himself, his monks, and his dependants. In the valuation\* of the monastery we have these annual payments deducted, beside others: John Coche, bailiff of the manor of Hurdewyk, £3; John Harrys, general receiver of the monastery, £5; John Wynnacotte, bailiff of the manor of Woryngton, £3; Sir Thomas Denys,† as seneschal of the liberties of Tavistock, £3, and as seneschal of Cowick manor, £1 6s. 8d.; Sir Peter Eggecombe,‡ seneschal of the monastery, £3 6s. 8d.; John Thomas received £3 a year, as general auditor of the monastery, and £1 as auditor of Cowick, but nothing (*nil*) as sub-seneschal of the same manor. So Richard Pollard and John Alford,§ doubtless for good reasons, received nothing as sub-seneschals of the monastery and other liberties

\* OLIVER, p. 110.

† He was also a pensioner of Newenham Abbey, of Buckfastleigh, and Plympton. He is commemorated in PRINCE'S *Worthies*, and by a tomb in the church of Holcomb Burnel. He was strong enough and clever enough to live and flourish from the days of Edward IV. to those of Elizabeth. He was privy councillor to Henry VIII., and seven (or nine) times sheriff of Devon.

‡ This Sir Peter, or Piers, had been sheriff of Devon. OLIVER, p. 240, gives a letter of his to Cromwell, asking for the temporalities of the priory of Totnes, though he speaks highly of the prior.

§ A John Alford, probably the same, was also sub-seneschal of the Devonshire manors of Plympton priory. OLIVER, p. 147.

of Tavistock. John Amadas, in lieu of his corrody, received £5 a year from the augmentation court, 23rd April, 1539; and John Elyott, the organist, was allowed £6 a year by the same court, 10th December, 1539. It would have been a reasonable reform to give back to the parish priests the full value of their livings, which had been appropriated by the monasteries; but it was hardly to be expected that the laity would be in this respect more generous than the monks; and, as a fact, the vicar of Tavistock went\* on receiving just what he had received before. As to the convent itself, Abbot Peryn had the good allowance of £100 a year, whilst his twenty brethren were assigned pensions varying according to their office or seniority. Robert Walshe, the prior, received £10; John Carter, prior of the cell of Cowkye, £8, and John Harrys the same; John Puxeley, John Axworthe, and William Chester each received £6 13s. 4d.; William Growdon, Stephen Kemell, William Pike, Richard Gregory, William Williams, and Richard Wakehame, £6 each; William Lechedon, Edmund Peryn, John Abrahame, John Benett, and Nicholas Buckefaste, probably as being somewhat junior to the others, all received £5 6s. 8d. John Wele and Richard Peke, being most likely novices, received £2 each; whilst Richard Bonyfote, perhaps for some misbehaviour or because he had only just entered, received nothing. This list of pensions is signed first by Thomas Crumwell, and then by Js. Tregonwell, Wylyyam Petre, and John Smyth.†

\* See Abbot Richard of Esse and Provision for the Vicar.

† DUGDALE, p. 503.

The abbot's pension\* was equivalent to more than a thousand a year of our present money. He lived on in Tavistock, tradition says in a house built for him at the top of West Street, and called Stonepost, with a capital garden at the back of it, that used to be known as Fairchilds. The old house was standing in the early part of the century, though it had been, no doubt, much altered. Our wardens' account for 1543-4 speaks of £6 paid to Sir John Peryn, Jesus' priest, for his wages by the yere. This was probably our abbot, who with plenty of time and plenty of energy still left him, may have been very glad to help the vicar in his spiritual duties, or to accept the office of priest to the Jesus' guild, or to officiate in the chapel† formed within the precincts of the abbey, and licensed for divine worship by Bishop Veysey, 10th March, 1540-1, at the request of the Lady Dorothy Mountjoy; for the expelled abbots and priors often became parish priests.‡ But this is only a surmise, and Sir John Peryn, the Jesus' priest, may have been the John Perins who succeeded William Lawnder as vicar in 1554. Our last abbot§ made his will at Tavistock 6th of October, 1549, and it was proved 30th of April, 1550. It is very likely,

\* John Howe, the last prior of Plympton, received £120 a year; and Gabriel Dunne, abbot of Buckfast, the same; John Charde, abbot of Ford, £80 and 40 wainloads of firewood; Richard Gyll, of Newenham, £44; John Toker, of Buckland, received £60 a year. In 1557 Toker was presented to the vicarage of Buckland by the new patron, Richard Crimes.

† OLIVER, p. 93.

‡ See OLIVER on Ford Abbey, Totnes Priory, and Buckland Abbey. Thomas Rychard, prior of Totnes, was made rector of St. George's, Exeter.

§ DUGDALE, p. 492.

therefore, that he died here, in the winter of 1549-50, and was buried in the parish church.

At the suppression, Buckland Abbey was valued at £241 a year, and pensions were provided for the abbot and twelve monks. Of these Thomas Maynard received £5 6s. 8d., and William Alford £5. Newenham Abbey was worth £231; Hartland Abbey £306; Ford Abbey was worth between £370 and £380 a year; and when Thomas Chard resigned, in March, 1538-9, there were only thirteen monks to be provided for. Plympton Priory, the richest foundation in Devonshire, was valued at £912 per annum, and the canons were only eighteen in number. Tavistock Abbey could boast the earliest foundation in Devonshire, and it was only just behind Plympton in wealth, being valued at £902 and some odd shillings.

The possessions of the abbey are thus given in the record\* of the grant in the augmentation office to "Sir John Lord Russell and the Lady Anne his wife": "The whole demesne and site of the late monastery of Tavistock, and all its appurtenances, all the burgh and town of Tavistock, and all the burgages therein, the manors of Hurdwick, Morwel, and Morwelham, the hundred of Hurdwick, otherwise called the hundred of Tavistock, the Bartons or Granges of Hurdwick, Morwel, and Morwelham, with their appurtenances, the demesnes and manors of Milton Abbot, otherwise Milton Legh, Lamerton, Hole, Brentorre, Wyke Dabernon, Peterstavy, Ottrew, otherwise Ottery, Whitchurch, and Newton, the manor of Antony, the rectory and vicarage of Tavistock." All

\* KEMPE'S *Notices*, p. 20.



this was to be held of the king by the service of one knight's fee yielding annually, at Michaelmas, only £36. There was also granted to the same, for the service of one knight's fee, at the reserved rent of £148 5s. per annum: "All the burgh of Denbury, the manors of Denbury, Plymstoke, Worynton, Cowyke, Exwyke, Barlegh, Aldridge, Cavitynch, Whymple, Wodmanston, Cristenstow, Borynton, and Cornwood, in the county of Devon, lately belonging to the abbey; also the manor of Hawkewell, co. of Somerset, the rectories or churches of Whitchurch, Lamerton, Milton Abbot, *alias* Milton Legh, Borynton, the chapel of Aldridge, the rectory of St. Thomas without the west gate of Exeter, the rectories or churches of Christenstowe, Okehampton, Spreyton, Anthon, and Petherwyn, *alias* North Petherwyn." The grant of church property in Devonshire likewise included "all the demesne and site" of the Cistercian monastery of Dunkeswell, which carried with it the churches of Awliscombe and Sheldon, as well as lands in many parishes near Honiton; the site of the monastery of the Dominicans, or black friars, in Exeter, a foundation noted for its theological learning; and "parcel" of the late monastery of Tor. Tor, which was under the strict Norbertine rule, was founded in Richard I.'s reign by William lord\* Briwere, or Bruyer; and Dunkeswell owed its foundation to the same devout and generous patron. The Dominican friary in Exeter was probably founded by

\* PRINCE in his *Worthies* (1701), following Fuller, says that lord William founded a hospital in Somerset and a priory of Augustinian canons in Hampshire. He also says that bishop William founded a priory of nuns in Heavitree, Exeter.

lord William's nephew, bishop William Bruyer. At the Dissolution, Dunkeswell was worth £300 a year. John Ley, the last abbot, received a pension of £50, and his seven monks the average allowance; one of them, John Gaye, being appointed to the cure of Sheldon.

Besides its more solid possessions, our abbey had been receiving some annual payments which are not mentioned in the grant to Lord Russell; *e.g.*, the rectory of Sydenham paid the abbey 1s. 6d. a year; Shevyock, 3s.; Rame, 2s. 2d.; whilst the rectory of Whymple paid the more considerable sum of £1 6s. 8d. As we have seen,\* the cell of St. Nicholas, in the isles of Scilly, seems to have been too poor to be included in the valuation of the property of the abbey under Henry VIII. The isles themselves came to the Crown by an exchange under Queen Mary; and when Queen Elizabeth let them to Sir Francis Godolphin at a rent of £10 a year, the grant included the church property as well as the rest of the islands.

We cannot but regret the ruthless and indiscriminate way in which the religious houses were put down; and we may also regret that more of their revenues were not reserved for the service of God and the help of the poor. But taking a wider view, we may regard the suppression of the monasteries as a necessary part of the Reformation—the struggle for national independence and liberty of thought in religion—as it was carried out in England. And then, with full consciousness of the mixed motives that led to this settlement and the bitter suffering involved in the

\* Book ii., chapter 4.

struggle, we may yet be very thankful when we compare our fate with that of our neighbours. For France, Germany, and the Netherlands endured a much longer agony than England had to bear, and now cannot show for it anything equivalent to our Anglican Church, in its endowment of wealth, and its combination of freedom of thought with devoutness of spirit. The best proofs that the nation at large came ennobled out of the furnace are to be found in the grand outburst of genius under Elizabeth, and the successful struggle for political and personal liberty under the Stuarts.

Here in Tavistock we are naturally inclined to dream of these far-off things, and to wish that more relics of them had been spared to us. But though Tavistock lost its most obvious distinction in the ruins of its abbey; yet, for the time, its glory was fully maintained by the production of such men of mark as Judge Glanville,\* the great naval hero, Sir Francis Drake;† and the true poet, William Browne.

It is a more open question whether the spiritual wants of the parish, and the needs of its sick and poor, have been as effectually supplied, since 1539, as they were when the splendid abbey church over-

\* His father had settled in Tavistock, being a younger son of Glanvill of Holwell in Whitchurch, where the family had been settled for some three hundred years. See PRINCE'S *Worthies* on Sir J. Glanvill. The judge, besides Kilworthy, built a good town house to the north-west of the present Temperance Hotel. Some parts of it were standing forty years ago.

† In a map of the middle of the last century, in the Bedford office, a spot at Crowndale is marked as Drake's birthplace. The old house used to stand there. This spot is at the north-east corner of the farm-yard near the canal.

shadowed the town, and the abbots wore their pontifical robes, and journeyed to London to take their seats in the House of Lords, or with their twenty monks dispensed a princely income in their beautiful chapter-house. We know, at all events, that the problem, how to deal with the poor and unemployed, was immediately and intensely aggravated by the Dissolution, and that the series of poor laws, devised to meet the difficulty, have left the problem still unsolved in our own day. Provision for the spiritual wants of the parish, scanty enough till the present century, would seem now, by one means or another, to be amply sufficient.

# Supplementary.

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## CHAPTER I.

### FOUR TAVISTOCK WORTHIES OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.\*

JOHN MAYNARD.

WILLIAM BROWNE.

THOMAS LARKHAM.

RICHARD PEEKE.

THE defeat of the Spanish Armada was not merely a great national victory, it also represents an outburst of national force and character which shows itself in a general diffusion of individual energy, ability, and even genius, which has no parallel in our history. It is not merely that we have men of such wonderful and varied gifts as Shakespeare, Bacon,

\* PRINCE gives us three Tavistock "Worthies" of the sixteenth century: Sir Francis Drake; John Fitz, the astrologer, the grandfather of Lady Howard; and Judge Glanvill. To our list of the seventeenth-century worthies, he adds Sir John Glanvill, the judge's second son, who was Speaker of the House of Commons in 1640. Over against these "worthies" we must set three notorious, but scarcely worthy, Tavistockians of the seventeenth century. (1) Sir John Fitz, who is represented on his father's tomb, in the parish church, as a studious and devout youth reading his Bible; but he grew up to be a violent brawler, and slew Master Slanning of Bickleigh, and others. (2) His daughter, the able, wealthy, beautiful, but not very scrupulous, Lady Howard, who left all the Fitz estates to her cousin, Sir William Courtenay, of Powderham. And (3) her fourth husband, the harsh, hot-headed, time-serving, yet brave soldier, Sir Richard Grenville, nicknamed "Skellum," *i.e.* the tortuous. These are all faithfully sketched in Mrs. G. RADFORD'S *Lady Howard*.

and Raleigh, but that the high tone and bright vivacity of the time were so widely diffused. Such poetical collections as *England's Helicon* abound in flashes of true poetry not unworthy of Shakespeare, but written by men of whom we know nothing more than the name, and often not even that. Presently, in the struggle of the seventeenth century, political wisdom was so widespread that an anonymous tractate of the time can excite the unqualified admiration of that universal genius and true philosopher, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The moral and religious forces are so strong that not only does English pulpit oratory reach its highest level in Donne and Taylor, but able divines, with strong original thoughts and a forcible way of expressing them, are scattered all over the country. Least of all was there likely to be any want of manliness at such a time. Since it had been proved to demonstration that one Englishman could thrash six Spaniards, heroes were likely to be found in every township.

When all kinds of ability and energy were thus spread abroad through the whole land, we are proud to think that Tavistock did not lag behind its neighbours. No; Tavistock, for its size and position, was well to the front in those days of genius. For not to dwell upon our greatest pride, Sir Francis Drake,\* who died in 1596, and was Thomas Fuller's

\* The first statue of Drake, in England, was erected in Tavistock by the late Duke of Bedford, in September, 1883. There is a replica of this statue, without the bas-reliefs on the pedestal, on the Hoe at Plymouth. Many years before a statue had been erected to Drake at Offenburg, in Baden, as the discoverer of the potato. The late Duke of Bedford, with similar generosity, adorned the town of Bedford with a fine statue of its greatest worthy, John Bunyan.

ideal of "the good sea-captain;" Tavistock, during the seventeenth century, besides being represented by those noble champions of liberty, John Pym and Lord William Russell, could boast of its eminent lawyer and politician, its able divine, its true poet, and its fighting hero, all of whom have left behind them, not merely a name, but also words worth remembering. Let these worthies march past for our inspection.

First comes our lawyer and statesman, a cousin of Sir Francis Drake, Serjeant John Maynard.\* A notable man, if for no other reason than because he was a conspicuous figure in English politics for sixty-five years, and those, from a constitutional point of view, the most important years in our history. But notable also because, in spite of a rough sort of consistency, he managed to keep in with one party after another, in those most critical times; and, having been "Protector's Serjeant" to Cromwell, and "Ancient Serjeant" to Charles II. and James II., ended his long public career as Lord Commissioner under William and Mary.

Born at Tavistock in 1602, Maynard passed from Exeter College, Oxford, to the Middle Temple. Here he associated with Noy, Selden, and Rolle—men who, like himself, combined great ability with hard work. Here also he learnt, Lord Campbell says, that love of black-letter law which he never lost, and which, according to Roger North, made him

\* The Rev. J. Ingle Dredge believes him to have been the son of Alexander Maynard of Tavistock, of the Middle Temple, and Honora Arscott, daughter of Arthur Arscott of Tetcott. For his life and character, see CAMPBELL'S *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, vol. iv. chap. 103, p. 3, second edition.



find more pleasure in the yearly Reports than in any comedy.

Backed by local interest, Maynard soon became the leader of the Western Circuit, and retained the leadership for fifty years. Combining politics with law, he sat in every Parliament from the first of Charles I. to the first of William and Mary, representing in succession Launceston, Totnes, Newport, Bere-Alston, Plympton, and Plymouth.

In the troublesome times of the Civil Wars, Maynard was a steady but moderate supporter of civil and religious liberty, protesting alike against ship money and the execution of the king; pleading for the privilege of Parliament, but joining Monk and the Presbyterians in bringing about the Restoration. His shrewd care for his own interests often made him indifferent to the claims of others. He was conspicuous in the impeachment of Strafford on the one side, and of Sir Harry Vane on the other. For this he is pilloried in the verses of Roscommon, Strafford's nephew and godson; and in those of the ill-requited Royalist poet, Samuel Butler. Roscommon writes :

“The robe was summoned, Maynard at the head,  
In legal murder none so deeply read.”

Butler, in his witty doggerel, asks,

“Did not the learned Glynne and Maynard,  
To make good subjects traitors, strain hard?”

As Maynard was, also, somewhat greedy and grasping, we need not wonder that Swift should describe him, with his usual candour, as an “old rogue”; “a knave and a fool, with all his law.”

Maynard began very early to practise public speaking, because, as he was fond of saying, he considered law to be *ars bablativa*—the art of babblement. But in spite of this, or perhaps because of it, and though he protested that long speeches were the bane of Parliament, the specimens of his own speeches given us in Campbell's *Life* are somewhat tedious. He was, however, never wanting in shrewdness. Objecting to inexperienced young men being set to command our ships, he compared this with the state of things under the Commonwealth. "The question," he says, "used to be, 'Is he a godly man?'" and he was employed. I asked them, 'Can a godly man, because he is a godly man, make a watch or a pair of boots?'" Perhaps Cromwell would have answered, "No, sir. But a godly man won't undertake what he can't do; and whatever a man can do at all, he will do the better because he is a godly man."

All Maynard's learning could not dull his wit, and two capital sayings are reported of him. That bully Jeffreys usually respected the old serjeant; but once, in a rage, he twitted him with his age, and consequent forgetfulness of some point of law. "True, Sir George," Maynard answered; "I have forgotten more law than you ever knew." When Maynard came, at the head of his profession, to greet William III. at Whitehall, the king, speaking courteously of his age, then verging towards ninety, said he must have outlived all the lawyers of his time. With happy readiness, the old man replied, "If your Highness had not come over to help us, I should have outlived the law itself."

Only retiring from office in May, 1690, Maynard

died at Gunnersbury, near Ealing, in October of the same year. He had amassed a large fortune, and by his two granddaughters and co-heiresses he was ancestor of the earls of Stafford and Buckinghamshire; but he did not neglect Tavistock and its neighbourhood. At Bere-Alston he founded a charity school for eight free scholars, which is now merged in the elementary schools of the parish. Oliver says, in his *Monasticon*, that in Sir William Pole's time—*i.e.*, about 1635—Serjeant Maynard rented and occupied the abbey house\* here in Tavistock, in which Mrs. Bray says he was born. Our parish register records the burial of "Andrew sonne of John Maynard Esq.," on December 23rd, 1641; and our old documents, edited in 1887 by Mr. Worth, give us Serjeant Maynard as one of the feoffees of the Maudlin and Church lands from 1651 to 1679. His fondness for archæology, and his attachment to Tavistock, are both proved by his collection of deeds referring to our abbey. The deeds seem to be lost, but copies are fortunately preserved in Dugdale's *Monasticon*.

Not a hero, certainly, was our "Ancient Serjeant"—too fond of his fees and too fond of office for that—but still a serviceable man as things go; thoroughly devoted to his profession, and mildly devoted to his country; notable, at least, as not only witnessing the beginning and the ending, but actually taking part in every step, of the great constitutional struggle from 1625 to 1689.

Our worthy divine of the seventeenth century

\* In 1736 a new abbey house was built out of the ruins of the chapter house. DUGDALE, iv. 492.

seems to me a more interesting character than even Serjeant Maynard, though his career was comparatively uneventful. A stroll in Westminster Hall with the "Ancient Serjeant" would have been a treat, and would probably have told us some things about that wonderful time not to be found even in the voluminous pages of Macaulay or Gardiner; but an interview with Thomas Larkham would, I think, have been more refreshing, whether seated in the vicarage study in the winter in his "turned breeches," "shag coat," and coarse shirt of "dowlas," or meditating in the vicarage garden, in his "calamanco suit," in the leafy month of June.

Thomas Larkham was vicar of Tavistock from 1647 to 1660. His *Lectures on the Attributes*, now a very rare volume, deserves a place beside the greater work of Charnock. The diary, lately republished, and the personal notices bound up with the lectures, give us the picture of a man gentle and childlike, yet strong and versatile, attractive by the singular contrasts both of his life and character.

The vicar was often much dejected by troubles in his family, and by opposition, not merely from open enemies, but also from narrow and quarrelsome friends. His sources of comfort were, however, numerous and varied, ranging from spiritual meditation, and study of the attributes of the Deity, to the more earthly consolations of planting apricots, or gathering the first roses in the vicarage garden, or even of a game of bowls,\* which cost him fourpence.

\* In the middle of the last century there were two public bowling greens in Tavistock. This is proved by a map of the period in the Bedford Office.

Distressed by the "sinful and abusive" pamphlets of his townsman, Nicholas Watts, whose gifts still cheer the hearts of "virgin" brides and "godly" tradesmen, or by the "lewd and loud lye," uttered against him in his own pulpit by his young "neighbour minister," John Howe, of Great Torrington, he draws upon his two best resources, his religion and his humour; he "spreads his troubles before the Lord," and he immolates his enemies in doggrel verses.

It was rather strange that Larkham should complain of the abusive language of his adversaries, considering the fierce invectives he was in the habit of pouring upon his fellow-townsmen from the pulpit of the parish church. This is one specimen, amongst many, from that very rare\* volume, his twelve *Exercises on the Wedding Supper*. It was probably occasioned by Larkham and his friends being excluded from the management of the parish funds. It is from the sixth sermon. (p. 121.) "Because you and your Pride, Knavery, Folly, Covetousness, are found fault withall (which all the country stinks of), therefore you will add this to all your other wickednesses, to detain that which ye are only entrusted to receive and pay. Is it not enough that ye have embezzled the stock of the poor artificers, which was given by your charitable Ancestors; and carelessly (like fools) set out the yeerly renewals of the town to such as either cannot or will not pay the rent,

\* This volume was printed in 1652. It is rather a mean little book, not very well printed. The only known copy, I believe, belongs to Miss Rooker, of Plymouth. She kindly lent it to Mrs. George Radford; and whilst in her possession at Mount Tavy I had the opportunity of seeing it and making this extract.

wherewith the Schoolmaster should be paid; but that ye suffer men very well able to pay rent for houses to dwell in houses of charity, and to suffer some of them to run to ruine; that now in your last enfeofing the town-land, ye have conspired against the Church and all the Members of it, that not one of them should be made privy to your proceedings, nor the father of any one that Communicates with the Church (though every way more sufficient in estate and far greater payers to all paiments than ye yourselves). That ye nick-name the people of God a rigid faction; the like unheard of abominations (which a modest man may blush to speak of, though you do not to practice them); I say is not all this enough, but ye must detain that which others have cared for the procuring of, and which neither is nor never was yours? O consider this ye monsters, lest some monstrous judgment befall you."

The wasting of the parish stock, already referred to, seems to show that Larkham's invective was well deserved, and also that it wrought no lasting improvement. But how could a man who not merely preached thus, but had his sermons printed, venture to complain when some of the less patient of his hearers gave him abuse in return?

Though a Puritan, Larkham was no bigot. He could pray for a blessing on the Thursday evening lectures in the hall of Mrs. Glanville's house, started by Watts and Company, in opposition to his own Wednesday evening lectures in church. He would give money to his servants, as well as to his children, to spend at St. John's Fair. He welcomes a roll of tobacco from Mr. Howard as if it were a gift from

Heaven, regarding it, probably, as a sign of goodwill restored, and using it, perhaps, to soothe his troubled nerves, when the excellent Mrs. Larkham had been more "rocky and untoward" than usual. He was a great reader, and, like a wise student, went on adding to his library, in spite of the many claims upon his scanty purse. In this shrewd and homely fashion he justifies his wider culture. "Surely if any man, Christian or heathen, Paul or Plato, can help me with a notion, whereby I, living in the Spirit, may come in my humanity to more acquaintance with God, I think I may safely and warrantably enough make use of it."

Larkham had something of the poet's sensibility, though little enough of the poet's art. He seems to have been the first to introduce psalm-singing into our parish church. In trouble or in joy he breaks out into verse. His children go to Plymouth for a holiday, and he can find leisure from heavier duties to write some couplets describing the event, and praying for God's blessing upon them.

And with all this, he is a careful man of business, keeping an account of his fees, and even of the gifts in kind made by the faithful, looking well after his farms at Radge and Pixon, the fields in Ford's land, and the mill in Dolvin, and opening a chemist's shop with Mr. Countie when he is turned out of the vicarage, in October, 1660. Diligently, too, he does his duty by his many relations; by his sisters still living in the old home at Lyme; by his son George, first at Cambridge, and then in the ministry at Cockermonth; by his daughter Jane, who marries Daniel Condy, and becomes the mother of many



generations of Tavistockians; and by poor daughter Patience, who marries Lieutenant Miller, goes with him to Ireland, and is presently left a widow, with children, on her father's hands. The grandchildren too, look to the home at Tavistock for help; and with so many claims upon him, our good vicar has had a hard fight sometimes to make the two ends meet. But he keeps bravely struggling on to the end, ministering to the last, as the cruel laws will let him, to the "poor despised handful" of like-minded folk which he had gathered about him at Tavistock. According to our register, "Mr. Thomas Larkham" was buried here December 23rd, 1669, and, local tradition says, in the chancel of St. Eustachius. Nonconformist as he was, it does not need much charity to feel that the parish church is somewhat the more sacred for being the resting-place of one so brave and faithful, so kindly and so childlike, as Thomas Larkham.\*

And who is this, our next worthy, the little man with thoughtful, far-searching eyes, and an amiable expression passing quickly from grave to gay, and back again from gay to grave? This is our poet William Browne; for brother poets, "Bonny Browne" and "Sweet Willy of the Western Main."†

Born and bred by "Tavy's voiceful stream," his eye and thought and feeling were all trained by

\* For further notice of Larkham and his writings, see Appendix D.

† William Browne was born at Tavistock in the year of the Armada, 1588. He seems to have been related to the Karslakes and Glanvilles. See the "Memoir" in HAZLITT'S *Works of William Browne*, p. 17; and *Records of the House of Glanville*, by W. A. S. GLANVILLE RICHARDS, p. 184.

the beauties of our rivers and moorlands, as Wordsworth's were by the beauties of his own lakes. Like Wordsworth, too, he carried the impression of these native beauties with him everywhere—to the comparatively tame scenery about Oxford and the dull precincts of the Law Courts, not forgetting them in his foreign tour with Lord Carnarvon, nor even amid the charms of Wilton, graced with the presence of the Sidneys. Picture him, yet a lad, wandering in meadow or wood, by the river side or over the neighbouring downs, and awakening thought and fancy, and a high conception of the poet's worth, as he reads with delight the *Faerie Queene* of his master Spenser, or Sidney's *Defence of Poesie*. Picture him in manhood standing by the sluggish Thames in Oxford or in London, but seeing instead the tawny stream, and almost hearing the sweet babbling, of his own impetuous Tavy. For Browne is the most pleasant of pastoral poets—in spite of his antique myths and personations, his occasional conceits and frequent exaggerations—*because* he describes pastoral scenes at first hand, with the direct truth and simplicity that only come from loving familiarity, as they were *not* described by any poet, from the *L'Allegro* of Milton to the *Lyrical Ballads* of Wordsworth and Coleridge.

In his own day, William Browne was highly commended by the critical Ben Jonson and the learned Selden. He lived on familiar terms with the great Chapman and the sterling, voluminous Drayton. He was the special friend, rather, perhaps, the envied master, of that unequal poet but excellent patriot, George Wither. Browne was, and is, especially

beloved of his brother poets. He gloried in his art ; he found keen delight in a well-turned phrase or a tuneful couplet. He was a careful student of the English poets, not merely of Spenser and Chaucer, but even of the little-known Occleve and Joseph of Exeter. Therefore, as he deserves, he has been appreciated by his fellow bards, being carefully studied by John Milton, and much valued by two such thorough poets as John Keats and Mrs. Browning.

Browne's *Pastorals* wander on without any definite coherence ; but, like the waters of his "native Tavy," they flow on gaily ; and, if broken and rough in some places, they are continually falling into pleasant passages of force and beauty. And with all the copiousness and fluency which mark his verse, he is never tedious or common-place. He knows when to stay his hand or change the subject, and Ben Jonson gives him praise especially for this, that his purpose clearly was, not to see *how much* he could write, but *how well*. Like the *Faerie Queene*, *Britannia's Pastorals*, whilst they are avoided by the prosaic, will always be read with pleasure by those who are gifted with some share of poetic feeling.

But our poet could be humourous on proper occasions, as his verses on Lydford Law show very plainly. How well he could handle grave subjects is proved by the fourth eclogue of his *Shepherd's Pipe*, and the celebrated lines on "Sidney's Sister," the dowager countess of Pembroke, perhaps the most perfect epitaph in our language. These verses, long attributed to Ben Jonson, were rightly reclaimed for William Browne by Mr. Pengelly in the *Transactions*

of the *Devonshire Association* for 1887. It should be possible to make a very pleasant volume of selections, like the "Canterbury" edition of Spenser and Wordsworth, out of the works of our Tavistock poet.

We have no trace of William Browne after 1640. It is hardly likely that the entry in our register, September 27th, 1643 — "William Browne was buried"—can refer to him; for as a man of substance, if not as a poet, he would, unless Puritan feeling prevented, have been dignified with the title of "Mr." or "gent." No traditions concerning him survive, and none of the Tavistock Brownes of the present day claim any connection with him. But to those privileged to wander by the banks of the Tavy and the Walla, to enjoy the fine view of the Tamar from Blanchdown Woods, or to hear the murmurs of the Tavy from the deep shades of Ramsham, it should be an added pleasure to remember that these scenes of beauty were enjoyed and celebrated, nearly three hundred years ago, by one who knew the England of Shakespeare, who was the intimate friend of the great Elizabethans, who was Spenser's most faithful follower, and in whose verses are to be found suggestions at least of *L'Allegro* and *Comus* and *Lycidas*.

Our soldier hero is, of course, "Manly Peeke."\* He stands before us in the grim, pathetic earnest of real

\* One Richard Peke was a monk here at the surrender of the abbey in 1538, and received 40s. a year pension. Another, probably our hero's father, was a practising attorney here in 1597. DUGDALE, p. 503, and WORTH'S *Tavistock Records*, p. 94.

life, in the strong, simple narrative and quaint frontispiece reprinted for us by Mr. Brooking-Rowe. The Peekes or Pikes, spelt in all sorts of ways, abound in our registers and documents from 1540, for three hundred years. Sturdy yeomen or shrewd tradesmen they seem to have been for the most part; but, as time went on, some rose in the world, whilst others stood still, or dropped behind. Probably there was some marked energy latent in the family, before it broke out in our seventeenth-century hero. A namesake, Richard Peeke, being sexton in 1540, "did waste three pecks of incense by breaking the vessel thereof," possibly the first exhibition of that strong Protestantism which shows itself so clearly in the narrative of his manly descendant. In 1629 a Ralph Peeke, being churchwarden, was presented to the bishop, at Exeter, and excommunicated at the cost of fourteen shillings and fourpence, "for not making of the dore in the churchyard." But, whatever his forefathers and his kindred may have been, certainly our Richard Peeke was a gentleman of Tavistock. He had a wife and children dependent upon him, and was devotedly attached to them; but he could not resist the fascination of excitement and possible glory which war brings with it. Already he had served in Algiers, under Sir Robert Mansell, and earned nothing by it but hard experience. But Drake's spirit of adventure seemed to possess his fellow-townsmen; and when, in the autumn of 1625, the drums were beating for the expedition to Cadiz, "cables could not hold" him, but with "many heroical spirits he must adventure therein" his "honour, life, and fortune." So he joined as a volunteer, that, like

other "worthies," he might by his "example encourage the common soldiers to honourable darings."

After the capture of the Fort of Puntal, Peeke landed to see the country, and gather oranges for his captain. Being surprised and taken prisoner, he spent some months in Spain, running many risks, enduring many hardships, but at last gaining his liberty, and achieving renown by his wonderful feat of arms, in which, with his "old trusty friend," the quarter-staff, he defeated "three Spanish rapiers and poniards." King Philip offered him service by land or by sea, but Richard begged off. Probably, he had had enough of fighting, and, like the generals of the early Roman Republic, and the soldiers of the Commonwealth, was ready, with all his military daring, to withdraw from the excitement of war to the quiet routine of private life. Restored to his anxious wife and children, he seems to have lived a contented and useful life here in Tavistock; not neglecting social duties, for our pewter flagons tell us that he was churchwarden in 1638; not exempt from domestic sorrow, for, as our registers prove, he lost his wife Abigail in 1643, and a son Richard in 1655. It would appear that he married again, and this time a widow, with children of her own; for Larkham tells us in his diary, August 24th, 1658, "I preached at the burial of Richard Peek's wife's daughter, and had 10s."\* He had, also, preached a

\* As late as 1854, amongst the "Prescriptive Fees" of the parish of Tavistock, we find 10s. 6d. to the "Minister," for a "Burial with a Sermon;" 1s. for a "Burial" merely, and 2s. 6d. for a "Burial with Chapter and Psalm." As if the corpse was not carried into the church, except for an extra fee.

funeral sermon for Richard Peeke the younger in 1655, and received for it the same fee of 10s. There was no other Richard Peeke buried until June 13th, 1690. If this was our hero, he must have equalled in longevity and bodily vigour his fellow-townsmen, Serjeant Maynard.

Like our efforts in the Soudan a few years ago, our expedition against Cadiz was redeemed from contempt by the pluck of our soldiers and the heroism of one man. Gordon's noble self-sacrifice at Khartoum, and Peeke's manly prowess at Xeres, restored to Englishmen the calm self-confidence which is indeed their birthright, but had been rudely shaken by mismanagement and misadventure.

On his return, Richard Peeke wrote that vigorous lifelike story of his adventures, which has been re-edited by Mr. Brooking-Rowe and printed in full in the first volume of Arber's *English Garner*. The story was too popular to lie buried. It was noised abroad, turned into ballads, and very soon it was made the central interest of a capital drama. This play—*Dick of Devonshire*—was evidently written by no mean hand. Printed for the first time in Mr. Bullen's *Collection of Old Plays*, in 1883, it is now again out of print. Mr. Bullen kindly lent me his own copy, and I have read it with so much pleasure that I wish it could be reprinted by itself in pamphlet form, for the gratification of Devonshire generally, and of Tavistock in particular. It is an admirably-written play, deserving all the praise bestowed upon it by Mr. Bullen and Mr. Saintsbury. Judging from its pleasant, manly tone and easy workmanship, it was probably written, as Mr. Bullen suggests, by



that excellent, sweet-tempered dramatist—the “prose Shakespeare”—Thomas Heywood. All the parts referring to Richard Peeke (here, as often in our registers, spelt Pike) are extremely good. They follow his narrative closely; and yet, without bombast or exaggeration, give fresh life to both character and action. The skill of an expert is shown in the careful fitting of the language to the occasion, from the rollicking prose of the fighting scenes to the dignified blank verse of the court and the prison. In the second scene of the first act we have a capital description of the Spanish Armada, and of its immediate occasion when

“That glory of his country and Spain’s terror,  
That wonder of the land and the sea’s minion,  
Drake, of eternal memory, harrowed th’ Indies.”

Thus our four worthies have passed before us; widely differing in character and in merit, but still all remarkable enough in their own ways to prove, I hope, that in those seventeenth-century times of widely-diffused genius, Tavistock could hold her own with any other town of like size in the country.

## CHAPTER II.

*SOME OF OUR VICARS.\**

TAVISTOCK having lost its abbots, had to make the most of its vicars, who alone were left to fulfil all the clerical duties of the town and parish. Curates came in later, and Nonconformists began, at the earliest, when Thomas Larkham retired from the parish church in 1662. Let us take a rapid review of our vicars from the beginning of the sixteenth century.

John Sargynt, or Sergent, seems to have been vicar for thirty years, from 1504 to 1534. In 1505 he witnessed the will of Walter Fitz, grandfather of the John Fitz whose monument, probably erected soon after his death in 1590, stands in the north transept of the parish church opposite that of Judge Glanvill.† This John Fitz was the grandfather of the celebrated Lady Howard. Walter Fitz, in this his will, doubtless as a recognition of respect, or in return for spiritual counsel duly valued, left his missal to Richard Banham, the abbot, who, as we have seen, secured the mitre for himself and his successors in 1513.

William Lawnder, or Launder, like Sergent, bore a name familiar in Tavistock for many generations, and even down to our own time, for a Launder was baptized here in 1831. He was vicar from 1534 to 1554,

\* For vicars up to A.D. 1500 see book iv. chap. 3.

† I am indebted for a copy of this will, which also contains references to the store and the guild of the church of St. Eustachius, to Mrs. George Radford.

that is, through the struggle with Rome that ended in securing national independence to the Church of England. His successor, John Perins, was probably nephew of our last abbot, and would, therefore, most likely be in sympathy with the return to the Roman communion, under Queen Mary, which happened in his time. He was succeeded by Robert Knight, who, as we have seen, was paid £10 in 1575 "for kepinge the schole." He also bears a Tavistock name; and he was brother-in-law of Judge Glanvill of Kilworthy, being the third husband of the judge's sister Mary.\* Their father was John Glanvill † of Tavistock, merchant and churchwarden, the younger brother of Thomas Glanvill of Holwell, where the family had been residing for some three hundred years. Knight is the first married vicar of whom we have record; and his marriage with Mary Glanvill reminds us of one of the great benefits which our country owes to the Reformation, viz., a married clergy. For, besides the blessing to the parish of female ministrations, and to the parson of a sensible and devout helpmeet, many of our best scholars and deepest thinkers, many of our bravest soldiers and sailors, and most daring settlers and travellers, during the last three hundred years, have found their earliest training in the parsonage or the manse.

Our next eight vicars are scarcely more than names to us now; though they were men of like feelings and difficulties with ourselves, and lived in times when

\* *Records of the House of Glanville* (Mitchell and Hughes, 1882), p. 184.

† There is a slab to his memory in the north-east corner of the parish church. Cf. PRINCE'S *Worthies*, under Sir John Glanvil.

England was great with the conquest of the Armada, and greater still by the works of her Spencer and Shakespeare; and when, as we have seen, our little town was contributing her full share to the national greatness by sending Francis Drake to lead the nation's seamen, and preparing William Browne to join the rank of her singers. Here are the short records of these eight vicars\* :—Ralph Taylor was presented in 1584; to be succeeded in 1585 by Timothy Fisher, who resigned in 1587, and was succeeded by Laurence Prychard, Queen Elizabeth presenting in the minority of Edward, earl of Bedford. Walter Ware followed on Prychard's death in 1592, being presented, for the same reason, by William, lord Burleigh. On Ware's death, in 1600, Richard Adams became vicar, to be succeeded in 1603 by John Ellistone. He resigned in 1612; and Edward Elyott, possibly a descendant of the organist of eighty years earlier, was jointly presented by Richard Waltham, Richard Bowle, and Walter Wentworth, esquires, acting as patrons, for this turn, by grant of Edward, earl of Bedford. Our registers tell us that one "Edward Eliot, preacher of God's word," had a son (Peter) baptized in 1617, two daughters (Joan and Honor) baptized in 1619 and 1620, and another daughter (Ruth) buried 31st December, 1647. John Blythman came after Elyott, who resigned the living in 1632.

Our earliest register—a handsome volume lately re-bound by the kindness of Mr. D. Radford of

\* We should insert amongst these Arthur Coode, who, Mr. Boase tells me, was vicar of Tavistock in the 16th century. He matriculated at Exeter College, Oxford, in 1575; his father, Gilbert Coode, having been a fellow of that College.

Mount Tavy—dates from 1614, two years after Elyott became vicar. It was during the same incumbency, in 1626, that Tavistock suffered from the terrible visitation of the plague. Nearly six hundred deaths, out of a population of three or four thousand, occurred in that year, more than a hundred dying in each of the months of August, September, and October. Dr. Barham, in his *Digest* of our registers, expresses the opinion that the parish did not rally from this blow for more than one hundred and fifty years. In 1780 the population made a fresh start, and, with the revival of mining in the neighbourhood, rose from 3117 in 1781 to 8147 in 1851. For the last twenty years, with the falling off in mining, we have gone back steadily from the 7781 of 1871 to the 6914 of 1881, and the 6252 of 1891.\* We learn from our register that Francis, son of Sir Francis Glanvill, of Kilworthy, was baptized, at Mary Tavy, 21st January, 1626, “by reason of the plague in Tavistock.”

To return to our vicars (who from this time are rather less shadowy), the next in order, Tristram Cleake, was, probably, something of a pedant; for, in the midst of the English entries in our registers, we have two in Latin, one telling us that Tristram Cleake, M.A., was inducted by John Polwhele, B.D., on the 10th of July, 1633; and the other, that “Tristramus Cleake, clericus,” was married on the 11th of August, 1631, to Elizabeth Drake, at Brent Tor. The wardens’ account for 1629–30 tells us that Mr. Cleake was then schoolmaster, at £16 a year; and this may explain his fondness for Latin. But if a scholar, Mr. Cleake was, also, a bit of a farmer; for a field off to

\* These figures include the population of the whole civil parish.

the left at the top of Bannawell still bears the name of "Cleake's meadow."

On Tristram Cleake's death, in 1638, the living was held by the able Puritan, George Hughes, B.D. He was born\* in Southwark in 1603, took his degree at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in 1622, and was chosen fellow of Pembroke. Being lecturer of All Hallows, Broad Street, London, he was silenced by Archbishop Laud; but was presented to Tavistock in 1638, the patron, probably, having little sympathy with Laud's church views.

The mere titles of Hughes's works illustrate the frequent mixture of quaintness and devotion in puritan writings. They are such as these, *The Art of Embalming Dead Saints*, a funeral sermon; *A Dry Rod Blooming and Fruitbearing, or, A Treatise of the Pain, Gain, and Use of Chastenings*; *Væ-Euge-Tuba, or, The Wo-Joy-Trumpet, Sounding the Third and Greatest Woe to the Antichristian World, but the first and last joy to the Church of the Saints*," &c. He also wrote, in *Morning Exercises on the Lord's Day*, an analytical exposition of the whole of Genesis, which Hartnell Horne calls "a very elaborate and curious work."

The most obvious result of Hughes's ministry in Tavistock was the conversion of Ralph Venning, who also became a noted preacher and writer amongst the Puritans. He went to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where he took his M.A. degree in 1650; and he was one of the ejected ministers of 1662. His books of devotion were great favourites, and ran through many

\* See "A Few Sheaves of Devon Bibliography," by J. INGLE DREDGE, *Devon Association Transactions*, 1889, vol. xxi. p. 498.

editions;\* the most popular being *Orthodox Paradoxes*; *The New Command Renew'd, or, Love One Another*; *A Warning to Backsliders*; *Milk and Honey, a collation of many Christian experiences*, with a second series called *Canaan's Flowings*. Selections from these and his other works were published after his death, under the title, *The Dead Yet Speaking*; or, *Mr. Venning's Living Sayings*.

George Hughes was vicar here until 1643, when he was appointed vicar of St. Andrew's, Plymouth. He had a son—born in Tavistock in 1639—whom he called Obadiah, and a daughter (Elizabeth) in 1640. He, also, was one of the ejected ministers of 1662; and he died at Kingsbridge on the 3rd of July, 1667. He was father-in-law of the celebrated Puritan divine, John Howe, who was ejected from the living of Great Torrington in 1662.

Of Hughes's successor, Thomas Larkham, we have spoken elsewhere.† There is no record of his institution, and his name does not appear amongst the signatories of the *Joint-Testimonie ‡ of the Ministers of Devon, &c.*, 1648. This is signed, first, by "George Hughes, Minister in Plymouth," and, amongst some seventy others, by "Andrew Gove, Pastor of Petertavy," "John Herring, Minister in Maristow," and "Joseph Squire, Minister of Lifton." Larkham would seem to have been one of those interesting but unfortunate eclectics who find it impossible to side with any party, and are therefore unpopular with all. In his

\* Since writing this I find that three of them have just been republished at 1/- each by Howe and Co, 23, Paul's Buildings, E.C.

† See Supplementary Chapter i. and Appendix D.

‡ From "A Few Sheafs," as above.



time, John Rundle was "Clarke of the Parish," and was buried 14th February, 1648. At the same time, marriages were often performed in private houses by neighbouring magistrates, such as Elford, Fowell, Francis, and Carter.

Samuel Browne succeeded Larkham in 1661. He buried "a child" here on the seventh of August in that year, and resigned the living in 1662. He was probably the son of the Rev. Samuel Browne of Shrewsbury, who matriculated at St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, in February, 1643-4.\*

It is not surprising that the ejected Larkham should have felt rather vexed at the cordial welcome with which his successor was greeted, and not have been as sorry as he ought to have been at the accident which befell him, and caused the closing of the church on his first Sunday. Larkham thus describes these events in his diary: "May 31st, 1661. Mr. Browne, minister, with his wife and three children, came to Tavistock, great joy and manifestations of it by riding, and running, and ringing, among superstitious, ignorant, prophane people. . . . Mr. Browne, bruised, came into town, the waggon (as was said), in which he came with his wife and children, overturning or breaking. So he preached not at all the Lord's Day following, though (*ut vulgo dicitur*) Whitsunday, neither was any other at all on that day in public. I went with some scores in the afternoon to Sauford Spiney, and there preached the Word of God."

After Browne came Thomas Glanvill, who was

\* From suggestions kindly sent me by the Rev. C. W. Boase, fellow and tutor of Exeter College, Oxford.

vicar from 1662 until his death in 1673. He was third son of Judge Glanvill and younger brother of Sir John Glanvill, who was speaker of the House of Commons in 1640, and founder of the Glanvill exhibition,\* 1649. Thomas Glanvill married, in 1624, when he was thirty years old, Joanna Calmadye, of Lew Trenchard,† and nearly forty years later, in 1663, Grace Danyell, of Totnes.‡ He buried a daughter (Grace),§ in February, 1669-70; and had a son (Thomas) baptized May 1st, 1671. In our burial register for 1673 we find: "Mr. Thomas Glanvill, viccar of this parish, died the 10th of August, and was buried on the 12th of the same month." During his incumbency, in December, 1870, died Eliseus Braye, who had been "Clarke of the Parish" for some twenty years, and in 1653 had been appointed "Parish Register" by John Elford, Esq., J.P.

Jasper Canne succeeded Thomas Glanvill in 1673, having been vicar of Witney, Oxon, from 1663. He held the living for seventeen years, so that he was vicar of Tavistock during the final struggle for absolute monarchy under James II. and the establishment of our present limited and constitutional monarchy under William and Mary. Canne matriculated at New Inn Hall, Oxford, in 1656, and he evidently valued education, for he sent one son, Jasper, to

\* This is a yearly gift for the better maintenance, at one of the Universities, "of an ingenuous and towardly youth educated as a grammar scholar in the Free School of Tavistock," and is now merged in the scheme for the new "Grammar School" so handsomely endowed by Hastings, duke of Bedford.

† From suggestions kindly sent me by the Rev. C. W. Boase, fellow and tutor of Exeter College, Oxford.

‡ *Records of the House of Glanville*, p. 186.

§ From our Parish Registers.

the same Hall, and another, Thomas, to Queen's College; both in March 1686-7. He had buried a son (Jonathan) in Tavistock, in February, 1673-4. But, like Hughes and Venning and Larkham, in spite of university training, Jasper (or Gaspar) Canne seems to have been a puritan in feeling, and, as far as might be, in practice. Several charges against him in the year 1682 were recovered with our other old records, in 1886. The mantle of the rebellious abbot, Richard Banham, would seem to have fallen upon him, for he is accused of contemning and slighting his bishop,\* refusing to wear the surplice when admonished by him, and saying, in open vestry, that he did not care a straw or a rush for the bishop, and that *he* was bishop in Tavistock. He is also charged with neglecting to catechise, with falling into a passion after the service, with refusing to administer the Holy Communion, when all was ready, because he would not wear a mended surplice; and even with turning offertory money to his own use. He is further charged with speaking profanely of the Bible, probably using a freer criticism than his hearers could appreciate; also, with excusing attendance at Common Prayer, if only the people would come to his preaching; and even with personating a poor, persecuted and distressed Nonconformist minister, when he was in Bristol, and so obtaining a guinea from a person of quality well-disposed to that party. As Mr. Jasper Canne remained vicar of Tavistock until his death in January 1689-90,† we must believe

\* WORTH'S *Tavistock Parish Records*, p. 115.

† His burial and that of his son Jonathan are entered in our Church Register. I am indebted to Mr. Boase for the Oxford details.

either that he made submission, or that slight faults and eccentricities had been exaggerated into serious charges by the animosity of parishioners, who differed from him not only in church views but also in the management of the parish stock, which was then valued at £2000. Probably, he and Larkham were somewhat alike, broad-church, impulsive, and rather quarrelsome Puritans, earnest and zealous enough in their own way, but wanting in the tact that might have conciliated opponents.

William Hume succeeded Jasper Canne in April, 1690, and held the living of Tavistock until October, 1696, when he was instituted to the vicarage of Milton Abbot. He was an energetic and more or less learned high-churchman; and he wrote a vigorously polemical book,\* entitled, *The Sacred Succession; or, A Priesthood by a Divine Right*. Hume had five children born at Milton,† John, Jane, Mary, James, and Daniel. Of these, James practised as an M.D., at Oxford, and was a friend of Sarah, duchess of Marlborough; whilst John, the eldest, born in April, 1704, became dean of St. Paul's, and, in succession, bishop of Bristol, Oxford, and Salisbury. William Hume died vicar of Milton Abbot, and was buried there March 16th, 1713-14.

His successor at Tavistock was John Rennell, who took his B.A. at Wadham College, Oxford, on 27th of April, 1691, and was vicar of Tavistock from March 1697 to April 1701, when he resigned.

\* Rev. J. Ingle Dredge kindly lent me his copy. Some remarks on this work will be found in Appendix E.

† I am indebted for these particulars to Rev. C. H. Taylor, the present vicar of Milton Abbot.

The account of the following strange episode in Rennell's career as vicar, I owe to the Rev. Herbert Reynolds of Exeter. The case was brought before the bishop of Exeter, Jonathan Trelawny,\* in July, 1700. It draws back the curtain for a moment, and discloses a curious bit of our local history nearly two hundred years ago. A little before Christmas, 1698, Mr. John Rennell, the vicar, had encouraged William Crocker and others "to learn to sing by book after the new way or method of singing now generally practised in this country." After they had sung in this way for a considerable time, "one Sunday, the vicar having called a Psalm, Mr. Crocker and others of the congregation began to sing to the tune they had learnt." Upon this Mr. Rennell, who was in the pulpit, called out, "Gentlemen, you are all my congregation, and I was never against your way of singing; but I hope you are sensible that you have sung blasphemy. The Gloria Patri to this 149th Psalm is rank blasphemy." Then, "without more ado but the giving of the blessing, he dismissed them all. This occasioned great disturbance and disorder. Mr. Rennell added, moreover, to the great offence of his parishioners then present, that a great many of those who pretended to be reformers or instructors of the new style of singing needed much more to be catechised themselves. After evening prayer, he, Mr. Crocker, and Mr. J. Edgcombe, went to the vicarage to know what the vicar meant by interrupting them, and whether he had any order from my Lord Bishop.

\* He was one of the "Seven Bishops" of 1688, and the hero of Hawker's stirring ballad, "And shall Trelawny die?" He was translated from Bristol to Exeter in 1688, and to Winchester in 1707.

Upon which Mr. Rennell tauntingly and slightly replied, 'My Lord! What, my Lord! What am I?' and so left them. These disturbances on the part of the vicar were repeated to such an extent that they two and Mr. Stephens went to the bishop, who advised them to go on in the same way of singing, and at the same time tell the vicar that they had been to him about it, and that he could see no blasphemy in that *Gloria Patri*." These are the words that offended the vicar :

"Unto the Three in One  
That bare record above,  
The Father and the Sonn,  
And Holy Spirit of Love,  
Be glory high  
As first begun,  
Soe shall be done  
Eternally."

"The vicar still persisting in his interruptions, the churchwardens went to the bishop, who wrote a letter calling upon Mr. Rennell to appear before him at his house at Trelawne on a certain day, with the churchwardens and some other of the parishioners. This they did; and when the bishop had expressed himself much dissatisfied, he proposed that they should agree on a certain number of Psalms with their tunes. Both parties were very well pleased. Order was given to sing them on the next Sunday, to read the bishop's order, and to receive the sacrament together; which they did. Mr. Rennell, however, was not satisfied, and Sir Francis Drake was applied to, who summoned several of the parishioners. The result was no ways conclusive, the vicar still protesting against these blasphemies; and though for a short

time holding daily service (to which twenty or thirty came daily), subsequently neglecting to do so. It is, however, expressly stated that, though he constantly baptized children in their parents' houses without urgent need, he was a man of sober, proper life, and beyond suspicion."—We cannot tell what bickerings led up to this strange climax. The case represents vicar John Rennell as decidedly more eccentric than his predecessor Jasper Canne, with something of Canne's tendency to be independent and irregular. But it is pleasant to find that congregational singing was diligently cultivated in our parish church two hundred years ago; and it is a caution against self-confidence to know that the attendance at the daily service was much better then than it is now.

What became of John Rennell when he resigned the living in 1701 we do not know. With Nathaniel Beard, who succeeded him, we seem to be coming very near our own time; not merely because his thirty years' incumbency carries us through the reigns of Queen Anne and George I., which are quite a part of our own modern history; but also because the vicar himself is linked by family connections with so much of the more recent life of our parish.

A Nathaniel Beard—most likely an ancestor of our vicar—had graduated M.A. of Exeter College, Oxford, in May, 1593, and had been vicar of Alternun in Cornwall from 1600 to 1641. He was succeeded by his son Thomas, who was ejected by the Puritans in 1645. Our vicar matriculated at Exeter College, March 24, 1693-4, as son of Nathaniel Beard, gentleman, of Exeter. He took his B.A. in 1697, and was



vicar of Tavistock from 1701 to 1730. He married Honor Sargent in November, 1713. He had one son, Nathaniel, who died as an infant, and another of the same name who lived in Tavistock as a surgeon, and was portreeve and J.P. in 1761, when the Duke of Bedford presented the town with the silver maces. This Nathaniel, junior, seems to have married twice. His first wife, Margery, died in December, 1758;\* and by his second† wife, Ann Spilman, he had a daughter (Catherine), who married William Halliday, of Gloucester. This daughter was called after her aunt, Catherine Beard, the vicar's second daughter. Catherine Beard was married in 1740 to William Rowe, a solicitor of Tavistock, connected with the Rowes of Lamerton, and therefore with Nicholas Rowe, who was poet laureate under George I., and the author of *The Fair Penitent*, and other once popular dramas, as well the translator of Lucan's *Pharsalia*. Catherine Rowe's children were Ann, who married Thomas Burnaford, surgeon, of Tavistock, and Honor, who was married, in August, 1771, to Daniel Pring of Iveden, near Honiton. This Daniel Pring was my great grandfather on my mother's side; and his son, Captain Daniel Pring, R.N., was one of my godfathers. Honor Rowe had probably become acquainted with the Prings, who had been settled for some generations at Iveden, whilst staying with her uncle, the Rev. John Rowe, at that time vicar of Awliscombe, the parish in which Iveden stands. The children of Daniel Pring and Honor Rowe bring us down to the recent history of Tavistock; for, whilst my grand-

\* Tavistock Register.

† Details furnished by Mr. Boase.

mother, Elizabeth, married her cousin, James Pring of Taunton, another daughter, Catherine, married William Harness, surgeon, of Tavistock, and was the mother of that genial friend of rich and poor, Thomas Burnaford Harness, M.D., and, also, of a daughter Ann, who married Nicholas, brother of John Rundle, our much-respected M.P. for nine years, and the father of Mrs. Rundle Charles, the well-known authoress. Mr. John Rundle married his cousin, the sister of Mr. John Gill of Bickham; and a sister of John and Nicholas Rundle married Mr. Henry Cornish, and was mother of Archdeacon Cornish; so that we have the descendants of Nathaniel Beard connected with the chief Tavistock families of the present century. Ann, the third daughter of Daniel Pring and Honor Rowe, had been adopted by her uncle Thomas Burnaford. She was married to Mr. John Taylor of Norwich, the great practical scientist, who came to Tavistock in connection with the mining operations at Wheal Friendship nearly a hundred years ago, and was recognised by Mr. John Rundle as the founder of our public library, which was begun in 1799. At the beginning of the present century, he was living at Holwell, in Whitchurch, and his name still lingers in Tavistock in "Taylor Square."

To retrace our footsteps, two other daughters of Nathaniel Beard, our vicar, Honor and Frances, remained single; but Ann married, in 1749, the Rev. John Jago, rector of Peter Tavy, of whom we shall hear more presently; and Mary was married, in 1759, to Mr. John Spry. We know nothing personally of Nathaniel Beard, though, judged by his family and descendants and connections, he was a sort of

Tavistock patriarch. He was vicar till his death, and was buried here 24th December, 1730. In August, 1730, Mr. Joseph Carpenter married a Mrs. Anna Beard, probably a sister or niece of the vicar.

Nathaniel Beard was succeeded by William Browne in March, 1731, a year which has some special marks of transition to the habits and thoughts of our own time; for in this year Daniel Defoe died and William Cowper and George Washington were born; and, in the same year, began the public preaching of Wesley and Whitfield, which was not merely to produce Methodism, but also, through the evangelical movement and the church revival, to give an impetus to vital religion throughout the land, which, thank God, has not yet spent its force. William Browne signs his name thus, with the final e, to, "A survey of the Boundaries of the Borough of Tavistock," made in 1738.\* The first signature is that of "William Rowe, portreeve," no doubt the William who married Catherine Beard in 1740. The second signature is that of "William Browne, vicar." Browne resigned the living in the autumn of 1747, probably from ill health, for he was buried here, a year later, on the 21st of November, 1748.

Our next vicar, Dr. Thomas Salmon, may have been a son of George Salmon, of Hinton, Salop, who matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford, 2nd April, 1723, at 18, taking his B.A. in 1726. But I am more inclined to think that he was a son of William

\* The copy of this Survey, kindly lent me by Mr. Samuel Richards, was taken from a board against the wall of the old Guildhall, 20th November, 1848, "the board being in such a state of decay that it would no longer hold together."

Salmon, who succeeded Hume as vicar of Milton Abbot, in 1714, and had a son Thomas baptized the 28th of August, 1715. This William Salmon, as a Latin inscription in the chancel of Milton church tells us, was sprung from Bedfordshire, and spent thirty-seven years as vicar of Milton Abbot, living not for himself, but for his pious flock and his flourishing offspring. It confirms this view, that Thomas Salmon was connected with Tavistock more than ten years before he became vicar, being probably perpetual curate of Whitchurch, which he held until 1758. Our registers tell us that he married Francis Spry here in 1737, and had a daughter (Catherine Spry) born to him here in August, 1739. Another daughter (Margaret) married Henry Beauford in 1771; and of their three daughters, one married Mr. Robins, and the other two (Mary and Elizabeth) lived in Bedford Place until October, 1852, when they died within an hour of each other, one being 77 and the other 74.

Thomas Salmon had a worthy competitor for mental and moral influence in Samuel Merrivil (Merivale), who was minister at the Abbey Chapel whilst Salmon was vicar. This worthy man, an ancestor of the present dean of Ely, the historian of the Roman Empire, besides being a good scholar was a practical philosopher. He chose a wife who was "sensible, sweet, good-tempered, and merry," though she was "much disfigured with small-pox;" and it was the record of his own experience that "the odds between three score and three hundred pounds a year is of no great account with respect to the real enjoyment of life." However much they differed in opinion, the vicar and the minister were alike in bereavement, for

our registers tell us that the vicar lost a daughter, Mary, in January, 1751, and a son, William, in April of the same year; whilst under the burials in December, 1757, we have, "Walter, son of the Reverend Mr. Merrivil,\* dissenting teacher." Thomas Salmon resigned both the livings of Whitchurch and Tavistock in 1858.

Curates first come on the scene in Dr. Salmon's time. John Tooker seems to have filled the post from 1754 to 1759, when he was succeeded by John Rowe, afterwards vicar of Awliscombe, who was curate until 1763. Thomas Roskilly came next, from 1763 to 1771; and then Richard Sleeman held the curacy for twenty-five years. When he became vicar he did without a curate; but his successor, Rev. E. A. Bray, was assisted by the notable Richard V. Willesford, who, besides being curate of Tavistock and Brent Tor, was also master of the Grammar School, rector of Coryton, and vicar of Awliscombe. Amongst the many estimable curates of the nineteenth century, it would be wrong not to mention the Rev. Thomas Gibbons, who was evening lecturer from 1843, and afterwards, as it seemed to his friends, buried his great and original powers in the seclusion of Peter Tavy rectory.

To return to our vicars, we come next to the Rev. John Jago, who married Ann Beard. He belonged to a very old Cornish family. His grandfather, George Jago, was vicar of Egloskerry; and his

\* The *Edinburgh Review*, October, 1884, has a fuller account of Mr. S. Merrivil; and an interesting summary of this article, by our worthy and witty townsman, Mr. E. Straker, appeared in the *Tavistock Gazette*, 14th November, 1884.

father, John Jago, who married "Mrs. Mary Cudlipp," when he was schoolmaster here in 1712, died vicar of St. Keverne in 1745. A son (John) was born in 1713, but died young; for a second son (John), the future vicar, was born in 1718. Amongst many other children were George, who was curate of Milton Abbot from 1760 to 1762, and rector of Sydenham Damerel from 1771 to 1780; Judith, who married in 1753 the Rev. Francis Waltar, then living in Tavistock; and Richard, who died as a lieutenant in the navy. John Jago, our future vicar, matriculated at Exeter College, Oxford, in 1735, but migrated to King's College, Cambridge. He was rector of Peter Tavy from 1748 to 1796; and he married "Mrs. Ann Beard" in June, 1749.

When the two hundred years' grant of the market dues lapsed in 1752, a yearly gift of some £20 was given from the Bedford Office to the schoolmaster. John Jago, according to local tradition, combined this office with that of rector of Peter Tavy, and lived in the school-house which used to stand at the south-west corner of the churchyard. Jago was vicar of Tavistock, still retaining Peter Tavy, from 1758 to 1796.

These were thirty-eight eventful years, during which the smouldering discontent of the masses broke out into the awful flame of the French Revolution. In the same period our home politics were chiefly guided by Lord North and William Pitt; and our foreign politics lead us from the taking of Quebec, 1759, through the sad loss of our American colonies, 1783, to the victories of Howe and Nelson over the French at Ushant and St. Vincent. In these years



Germany was reaching her highest literary development in Goethe, and our own English poetry was breaking from the trammels of Pope and recovering its ancient liberty in Cowper's honest love of nature, and in the strong genius of Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Landor. It was the day of the pluralists, and the church was still generally sunk in lethargy; whilst the Nonconformists were steadily drifting into Socinianism.

Whilst John Jago was vicar of Tavistock, the parish church received lasting proofs of the regard of "the most noble John Duke of Bedford," the giver of the silver maces to the town. He presented us with our handsome silver flagon, 22nd September, 1761, to commemorate the coronation-day of King George III. and Queen Charlotte; and in 1769, the year in which Junius attacked him in one of his most envenomed letters, he gave us our fine peal of bells. These all—as they tell us themselves—were made in 1769 by "Thomas Bilbie of Cullompton"; and round the tenor and the seventh we also read, "The gift of the most noble John Duke of Bedford, in the year 1769." The tenor has the familiar inscription: "I to the church the living call, I to the grave do summon all."

Perhaps, the gentle, kindly temper which still clings to the name of vicar Jago was partly due to the placid indifference of the eighteenth century. At all events, such was his character as tradition\* paints it;

\* Miss Jane Bredall, who died in 1890, *æt.* 76, had received this with other local traditions from her father. She told me, also, that her father remembered the pack-horses starting in long line across Dartmoor, with their loads of Tavistock kersies.



and the correctness of the portrait is proved by his starting a Sunday-school\* in 1789, which was to be supported by a parish rate and regulated by the vestry, though all the scholars had to attend church twice every Sunday. Our thankfulness for the increase of religious zeal may reasonably be qualified by the loss of charity and friendly co-operation which it has brought with it.

John Jago, with all his kindness of character, was ambitious for his family. He secured arms† for himself and his descendants; and he gave his son John so good an education that he became fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, in 1772. This son, afterwards Dr. Jago, was vicar of Rattery for fifty-four years, and of Milton Abbot, still retaining Rattery, for nearly fifty years. He resigned the living of Milton in favour of his son John, also a fellow of Exeter, for a few years from 1819; but was able to resume it on his son's death. He died at Milton in November, 1835, and there are tablets to his memory both at Milton and Rattery. He was succeeded at Milton by Sir St. Vincent L. Hammick, Bart., also a fellow of Exeter, and a devoted parish priest, who held the living until his death in 1888. So that, with the short interval mentioned above, the two incumbencies covered more than a hundred years.

Our vicar Jago was succeeded by Richard Sleeman, who had been his curate for twenty-five years, as well as perpetual curate of Whitchurch. He was the

\* Records of Vestry (1734 to 1802), recovered from private hands in 1885.

† *Parochial History of Cornwall*, vol. iv.

son of Peter\* Sleeman, gentleman, of Tavistock, and matriculated at Balliol in 1796. He had been schoolmaster when he was curate; and he seems to have been schoolmaster still when he was vicar; though he had the undivided parish of Tavistock on his hands, as well as Whitchurch, with no curate to help him.

These doggerel rhymes were given me by Mr. Charles Willesford of Tavy Cottage, as he remembered to have heard them from his father and uncle, who were pupils of Sleeman. They suggest a master of the Dr. Birch style, but well under authority at home.

“Within these walls two mighty monarchs rule,  
 One in the house, the other in the school.  
 Oh, what a wonderful and terrible disaster!  
 The master flogs the boys, the mistress flogs the master.”

A gentler side of the old vicar's domestic life is presented in a marble tablet on the north wall of the chancel of our parish church, which records, in touching words of eulogy, the death at twenty-one of his daughter-in-law, Mary, the wife of Richard Sleeman, captain in the 28th Regiment. Another son, called Peter after his grandfather, matriculated at Balliol 27th March, 1892, and became perpetual curate and patron of Whitchurch on his father's death in 1811. Peter's son Richard matriculated at Balliol 17th December, 1830. He was curate to the Rev. John Russell, usually known as Jack Russell†; and his licence was revoked by Bishop Phillpotts, be-

\* There was a Peter Sleeman, probably an ancestor, buried here in 1605. WORTH'S *Parish Records*, p. 41.

† *Memoir of Rev. John Russell*, p. 234. Bentley, 1883.

cause his vicar would not give up keeping hounds. He succeeded to the living of Whitchurch on his father's death in 1848, and was for many years the most familiar figure on the Tavistock cricket ground\* just outside his own plantation.

Edward Atkins Bray, our next vicar, has had his life and character so fully described by Mrs. Bray, in her thirty-six letters to Southey, that there is no need to say much about him in this place, though he was vicar of Tavistock for forty-five years. His father, Edward Bray, who was manager of the Devonshire estates of the duke of Bedford, died in September, 1816. His mother was the daughter of Dr. Brandreth, of Houghton Regis. By her first husband, Arthur Turner, of Bedfordshire, she had a daughter (Dionysia) who inherited large wealth from her father, and married her cousin, Henry Brandreth, of Houghton Hall.†

Our vicar was born in the abbey house, which occupied part of the site of the present Bedford Hotel. He was privately educated by a Mr. Cake, curate of Moretonhampstead, who did his best to cultivate in his pupils the elegant diction and the courtly manners of Lord Chesterfield. These manners suited well the reserved character, handsome face, and fine figure of young Bray; and, to show that the lessons

\* This enclosure on Whitchurch Down has witnessed much good cricket in the last forty years; and for scenery it must be the most beautiful cricket ground in the western counties.

† I was privileged to be vicar of Houghton Regis from 1879 to 1883, on the presentation of the late duke of Bedford. The present patron is Henry Brandreth, Esq., of Houghton Hall. I have worked in many parishes, but I have found no people more friendly and helpful than my kind parishioners at Houghton Regis.

in elegant diction were not forgotten, in the early years of his ministry, instead of writing his own sermons, he gave his people selections\* from the English divines of the last three centuries, "abridged and rendered in a modern and appropriate style." Having served as a captain of volunteers, Mr. Bray entered the Middle Temple in 1801. Five years later he was called to the Bar, and for five years more travelled the Western Circuit. But he was too shy and reserved to make a good barrister. All his tastes were literary and theological; and in 1811 he was ordained by the bishop of Norwich. Happening to be with his parents at Tavistock when vicar Sleeman died, in December of that year, Mr. Bray, through the intervention of friends, was appointed his successor, and on the 8th of January, 1812, was instituted to his first and only charge, which he held till his death in 1857. He sat on the bench as a county magistrate from 1812 for more than twenty years; and in 1822 he took his degree of B.D. at Trinity College, Cambridge, as a ten years' man. In 1812 the present vicarage was built for him; and thither, a few years later, he brought his wife, Anna Elizabeth Kempe, the widow of Charles Stothard, who had been killed by a fall in the church of Bere Ferrers. This is the well-known Mrs. Bray, the authoress, who did what she could by her letters and romances to bring distinction to her husband and his native town. Their life was very peaceful and secluded, far too much so for our modern notions of what that of an active parson of a town ought to be.

\* Specimens of this interesting effort may be seen in the Tavistock library.

Their quiet existence, in the turmoil of the Victorian era, is one proof amongst others that, in many cases, the tastes and habits of the eighteenth century lasted far on into the nineteenth.

During Mr. Bray's incumbency, in 1845, the parish church was restored, being, with the handsome church of St. Mary Magdalene, Taunton, amongst the earliest examples of restoration in the West of England. The new organ, by Walker, was set up in the church in April, 1846; and at the same time the parish was fortunate enough to secure the services of Dr. S. S. Wesley, then organist of the parish church of Leeds, under the celebrated Dr. Hook, and afterwards, as a tablet in the north transept shows, organist of the cathedral at Exeter. I am indebted for this fact to a copy of *The Tavistock Monthly Advertiser* for April, 1846, kindly lent me by Mrs. Solomon Perry. The *Advertiser* says, "Dr. Hook, the vicar, and the inhabitants of Leeds generally, extremely regret the loss of Dr. Wesley, not only as an organist, but also as a teacher of music. . . . His predilection for Devonshire is the chief inducement for leaving his present lucrative situation."

Vicar Bray lies buried under the arch of the old abbey church opposite the Bedford Hotel. In the chancel of the parish church a brass tablet to his memory tells us that he was born 18th of December, 1778, and died 17th of July, 1857; and it describes him, with excusable eulogy, as "a laborious student, an eloquent preacher, an elegant poet, a high-minded gentleman, and a humble Christian."

In September, 1857, Mr. Bray was succeeded by the Rev. Osborne John Tancock, D.C.L., son of Admiral

Tancock, who fought under Nelson at the Nile and Trafalgar. Dr. Tancock took his degree at Wadham College, Oxford, in 1830, and was for many years head master of the Truro Grammar School, as well as curate in charge of St. John's. He was in his fifty-first year when he came to Tavistock, and he held the living for fifteen years. During his incumbency, 28th of November, 1867, the new church at Fitzford, built by William, duke of Bedford, was opened by Archdeacon Downall. Clutton was the architect, and it is a striking imitation of the Lombardo-Gothic style. Owing to a stroke of paralysis, Dr. Tancock resigned on the 17th of August, 1872, and went to reside at Camplehaye, in the neighbouring parish of Lamerton. Here he died on February 20th, 1874; and he was buried at Tavistock, in the old cemetery, on the 25th.

I paid my first visit at Tavistock vicarage in June 1859, as a college friend of Dr. Tancock's eldest son, now rector of Little Waltham, Essex. At a later visit, on the 4th of October, 1864, I was married, in the parish church, to Dr. Tancock's eldest surviving daughter, Charlotte Elizabeth. Those who remember Dr. Tancock will not think me unduly biassed when I say that he was a man of wide culture, great geniality, and a very unusual breadth of sympathy with all sorts and conditions of men. He had, also, a wonderful faculty for drawing out the history of other people, and remembering all about them. Besides the tombstone in the cemetery, there is a brass to Dr. Tancock's memory in the parish church over against Mr. Bray's. It is inscribed with a true and simple record—"Osborne John Tancock, D.C.L.,



born June 9th, 1807; died February 20th, 1874. For fifteen years vicar of this parish. 'To me to live is Christ, to die is gain.'

In November, 1872, Dr. Tancock was succeeded by the Rev. Walter James Tait, son of the Rev. William Tait, the author of valuable lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews and other theological works. Mr. Tait passed from Rugby to Balliol; where, through mutual friends in the country, I had the pleasure of knowing him. After a first class in "Mods." and "Greats," he became fellow and tutor of Worcester College, from 1864 to 1871. In 1871 he accepted the Balliol living of Long Benton, Northumberland. He was vicar of Tavistock from 1872 until 1883; when he resigned, on being nominated to the rectory of St. Edmund's, Salisbury.

It may save the Tavistock antiquary of a hundred years hence some trouble, if I finish these notices with a few words about myself, as the present vicar of Tavistock. I was born 28th November, 1838, at Taunton, where my father, Henry Alford, was a surgeon in good general practice. But we come of a very clerical family; for my father's forefathers had been beneficed clergymen, without any break, from 1699, in West Somerset, where the family had held land for, at least, a hundred years before. In this succession we have a Thomas Alford who was prebendary of Wells at the beginning of the last century, being vicar of Ashill and Weston Zoyland; and a Samuel Alford who, at the close of the century, was dean of St. Burian, in Cornwall, as well as vicar of Curry Rivell, in Somerset. In this present century our clerical tendency has culmi-



nated in Dean Alford, the versatile writer and honest, laborious commentator, and the Right Rev. Charles Alford, sometime bishop of Victoria; and all the Alford's at present in the clergy list, twelve in number, belong to our clerical family. I was for six years a day boarder at Fullands, a popular private school a mile from Taunton, where I must have entered just as our modern hero, Gordon, was leaving for Woolwich. From 1852 I was at Crewkerne Grammar School, where uncles and great-uncles had been before, and where a manly tone was nourished under a somewhat Spartan discipline. From 1855, until I matriculated at Exeter College, Oxford, in 1857, I was at the College School, Taunton, a venerable foundation of Bishop Fox. This school had been revived under a master from Radley, a man of high culture, and a capital teacher. I think all my masters were kind-hearted, well-meaning men; but I have a strong impression, only deepened by twenty years of teaching, that their too ready employment of severe corporal punishment was a useless and cruel relic of barbarism, that ought to have been abandoned, long ago, with the barbarisms of our penal code. After all, my best teacher was my father, because he awoke in me that love of books which has made my education a lifelong business. This he did, partly, by his own example, for, in the midst of his large practice, he always had some good book in hand; partly, by reading aloud to us on winter evenings, Grimm's *Tales*, when we were little ones, Scott, Shakespeare, and even Chaucer, as we grew older.

When I matriculated, in 1857, Exeter College, besides being desirable for a West-Country man, from

its large West-Country connection, was a capital training school for future life ; for in its two hundred members were to be found all the varieties of taste and character likely to be met with in the world and the church. It was none the less suited for this, that only a few of us gathered round the scholars' table as reading men, for the majority of men in the world and the church are not students ; and whilst we were free, in religious matters, from the narrowing, unhealthy pressure of colleges attached to a party, a high tone of thought and conduct was encouraged by such earnest and able tutors as the Rev. H. F. Tozer, the Rev. C. W. Boase, Dr. Ince, the present Regius professor of divinity, and Dr. Ridding, now bishop of Southwell.

Having taken my degree in 1861, I was ordained curate of St. John's, Taunton, in 1862. This church, a fine specimen of Sir Gilbert Scott's Early English, was one of three in Taunton mainly built or endowed by my excellent vicar, Prebendary Frederick Smith, who, of all men I have known, according to his means, which were ample, lived most simply and gave most liberally. In 1864, I became curate-in-charge of Clayhidon, near Wellington, a large and scattered country parish, amid the beautiful slopes and combes of the Blackdown hills. From January, 1865, to June, 1869, I was chaplain of the Isles of Scilly, on the presentation of that hospitable "Lord of the Isles," and wise, if autocratic, ruler, Augustus Smith, late M.P. for Truro. After twenty years' absence, I still retain a vivid recollection of the beauty of the islands, and of the kindness and refinement of the people. In 1869, I was presented by William, duke

of Bedford, to the ecclesiastical district of St. Paul's, Tavistock, usually called Gulworthy, from the farm nearest to the church. St. Paul's includes all the country portion of the original parish westward of the Lumburn; and it reaches for about seven miles along the lofty, wooded banks of the Tamar, from Latchley Weir to Gawton Quay; the Blanchdown Woods and the Morwell Rocks forming part of this lovely river scenery. Before the district was separated, in 1857, it had been greatly increased in population and importance by the working of the Devon Great Consols and other copper mines. In 1878, I was presented by the late duke of Bedford, K.G., to the rectory of Aspley Guise, near Woburn; and by the same kind patron, a year later, to the vicarage of Houghton Regis, near Dunstable. In November, 1883, I came back to Tavistock, as successor to Mr. Tait; and I have endeavoured to follow his example and maintain, in these difficult times, a good feeling amongst churchmen of all schools, and a brotherly regard toward Christians of all denominations.

# Appendices.

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## APPENDIX A.

### *LEOFRIC'S MISSAL AT TAVISTOCK, AND EARLY DEDICATIONS.*

Collected from the late Mr. THOMAS KERSLAKE'S *Saint Richard  
the King of Englishmen and His Territory, A.D. 700-720.*

THE missal of Bishop Leofric, now in the Bodleian, has several accidental entries, especially of manumissions. Folio 8, which is said to be "in an earlier and more faded hand-writing," has manumissions by Ordgar and Eadgifu, and the places mentioned are all about the upper part of the Tamar, or about Tavistock; *e.g.*, "ocmund tun" (Okehampton); "curi tun" (Coryton); "ordgar æt bradan stane," (Bradstone); "liwtun" (Lifton); "lamburnan" (perhaps Lamerton); and "swuran tune" (Werrington); which "was given by Ordulph to Tavistock, and may have been the scene of the romantic story of Elfrida and Ethelwold."

"The missal probably belonged to Tavistock before it went to Exeter, and thence to the Bodleian. As usual with early great monasteries, Tavistock was probably a double one, for both men and women. Parker mentions *moniales* there." This mention of *moniales* occurs in Archbishop Parker's preface to

*Asser*, published in 1574, and quoted in Oliver's *Monasticon*, p. 89. No doubt these double monasteries were common in early days. There were such under the supervision of Jerome at Bethlehem, and of John Cassianus at Marseilles, in the fifth century; but Parker's solitary, and rather casual, testimony is not enough to prove that this was ever the state of things in Tavistock. Kerslake continues, "It seems most likely that, before the missal came into the possession of Leofric, it had belonged to the abbey of Tavistock, and came to Leofric from his predecessor in the bishopric of Crediton, Livingus, who had been abbot of Tavistock." (pp. 56, 57.)

On another point of interest, Mr. Kerslake writes (p. 38), "Early dedications were often groups of names, of which one became, sometimes by mere usage, the distinctive and therefore the popular or fixed name, such as we call *the* dedication. Most of them were in some such form as, To God, St. Mary, St. Peter, and others. The *foci* of the dedications were the chief altars, so that large or more ancient churches often had an accumulation. This accounts for the large number known as St. Mary's. . . . When the others were not wanted as distinctive, St. Mary, the first, was caught up into usage. Tavistock had succeeded a Celtic sanctuary, or cell, of St. Rumon, one of the old Hibernian bishops. When it became the nucleus of a great monastery it was St. Mary and St. Rumon."

## APPENDIX B.

OF THE BOOKS PRINTED IN TAVISTOCK ABBEY  
IN 1525 AND 1534; AND "THE DEVONSHIRE  
ADVENTURER," 1814-15.

THE title-page of the *Boethius* has an engraving of a seated and crowned king, Christ or the Father, with emblems of the four evangelists in the corners. Underneath is printed :

"The Boke of comfort called in laten  
Boetius de Consolatione philosophie  
Translated in to englese tonge."

At the end are the arms of Langdon of Keverill, at whose "instant desire" "Dan Thomas Rychard" undertook the work. This Dan Rychard was probably the "Dominus Rycardus, Custos," who signed his name to the surrender of the abbey. As the title "Custos" implies, he was incumbent of some living in the neighbourhood; and this may account for his name not appearing in the list of the monks pensioned at the Dissolution. As a sample of the spelling, and of Walton's translation, here is the third poem or metre :

"Metrū terciū Tunc me discusse  
Capitulū quintū Boecius loquitur  
And vhen thys cloude was clensed fro myn ye  
I was a none restored to my syght  
Right as vhen cloudes clippeth in the skye  
The sonne ys let to leme a downe hys lyght  
And reyne cloudes maketh in manner nyght  
And vhen a north wynde chacheth them a way  
The sonne will shew then hys bemes bright  
And as yt were bringeth ageyn the day."

As Mr. Boase says, the "vhen" is curious. If the language seems quaint for the year 1525, we must remember that the translation was made in 1410, only ten years after the death of Chaucer.

At the close of the work are some verses on the name of the translator; a sort of dedication, at the end of the book instead of the beginning, to a "sovereign lady," Virtue or Philosophy personified, or the Lady Elizabeth Berkeley, at whose suggestion the translation was done. It is written in the reverent, high-toned manner of the sonnets of Dante and Spenser.

"COGNOMEN TRANSLATORIS

Wyth al my hert to do yow reuerence  
 And seruyse suche as of me may be wrought  
 Lawly under youre obedyence  
 To plesen yow yf I suffysed ought  
 Wyth al my hert as ever I haue besoght  
 No thyng coueyt I of youre excellence  
 Eternally but that I may be brought  
 My souereign lady in to your presence."

There are no stops in the verses. The translator, John Walton, commonly called John of Oseney, then canon of Oseney, was abbot of Oseney in 1452, and archbishop of Dublin in 1472. Boethius had been already translated, or rather paraphrased, by King Alfred, and was afterwards translated by Queen Elizabeth, and imitated by Sir Thomas More. See Hodgkin's *Theodoric*, p. 276.

The confirmation of the charter of the Devonshire tanners was printed here in 1534, and the only known copy is that in the library of Exeter College, Oxford.



The title, with the royal arms above, and a tail-piece below, is as follows :

“Here foloyth the confirmation of the Charter perteynyng to all the tynners wythyn the coūtey of deuonshyre wyth there statutes also made at crockeryntorre by the hole assēt and cōsent of all the sayd tynners yn the yere of the reygne of our souerayne Lord Kynge Henry ȳ viij. the secūd yere.”

At the end there is an engraved leaf, with Christ on the cross on one side, and on the other Christ crowned as king, with the emblems of the evangelists, as in the *Boethius*.

These details have been kindly sent me by the Rev. C. W. Boase, of Exeter College.

Tavistock was still taking a forward place in literary matters when *The Devonshire Adventurer* was printed here by Mr. James Chave, Higher Back Street, for several months in 1814-15. It was edited by the Rev. George John Freeman, LL.B., and sold for eighteen pence. The number for June, 1815 (kindly lent me by Dr. Brushfield, Budleigh Salterton), contains short and thoughtful articles on education, on the prejudice against Indian nabobs, on the mixed good and evil in the world, and especially on war ; then, thirteen pages are given to verse and correspondence ; local intelligence comes next ; then we have such high matters of policy as “The New French Constitution, given at Paris, by Napoleon Buonaparte, April 22nd, 1815,” and “The Treaty between Russia, Austria, Prussia, and Great Britain, concluded at Vienna on the 25th of March.” The

number ends with a "Diary of the Weather for April, 1815."

An extract from the first paper will show that Tavistock was well to the front as to the true principles of education: "What child can be at peace under perpetual apprehension? There are some teachers so hasty and inconsiderate, so forgetful of the comparative incapacities of the child who is under their guidance, as to treat every fault with harsh reprimand or manual chastisement. Such a man should be avoided as a reptile, and have nothing to do with education . . . Children of a good disposition and a ready application should never be led to perceive that they are distrusted. Nothing that can excite disgust should be mingled with their studies; but their studies should be made pleasing to them by the good temper and attention of the master, by the placidity of his remarks, and by his gentle commendation . . . But severity is not more injurious to the progress of education than unbounded lenity. Either extreme should be avoided . . . The best way to discountenance passion in children is never to appear in a passion yourself . . . Curiosity in children is often unjustly suppressed . . . A good parent or a good tutor, who has once gained the respect and esteem of his pupils, is able to reward and punish wholly by mental operations," &c. &c.

## APPENDIX C.

*SOMETHING MORE ABOUT ABBOT BONUS AND  
BISHOP GRANDISSON.*

I AM indebted to Prebendary Hingeston-Randolph for the following particulars, which came to me too late to be embodied in the text. They are gathered from Bishop Grandisson's Register.

In June, 1328, Bonus was inducted by the Archdeacon of Totnes. In August there is a complaint that the abbey is little removed from utter desolation, both of life and of religion, because it had been so long without a shepherd. There had, in fact, been an interregnum of more than two years. In September the bishop writes to the abbot that reports of scandals, conspiracies, and jealousies have come to his ears; and he repeats the prohibition, already given in August, that no new monks are to be admitted until he has visited the abbey. This was on the fifth. On the seventh Abbot Bonus replies that the admission and tonsuring of monks belongs only to the abbot and his convent. Then, he justifies the admission of new monks on three grounds: First, the bishop would not like to find the choir empty when he visited the abbey; secondly, the bishop had given leave, answering "*Placet nobis: faciatis quid vultis;*" thirdly, the abbot had heard from his convent that his monastery was totally exempt from all episcopal jurisdiction. In the margin is the usual summary, "*Responsio Abbatis,*" &c.; and here, before "*Abbatis,*" Grandisson has inserted, in his own handwriting, the

word "fatui," *i.e.* foolish; and at the end he has written, "Iste Abbas, qui dicebatur Bonus erat pessimus quasi hereticus," *i.e.* "The abbot who was called Good was the very worst, like a heretic." "Heretic" being then such a term of contemptuous reproach as "publican" was in the time of our Lord. On the 2nd of October the bishop, at Buckfast abbey, writes to say he was about to visit the abbot on account of the popular outcry against him and his house, but he preferred to come first, in a friendly and informal way, to try what consultation and advice could do. If this way of charity should fail, and he should have to exchange gentleness for severity, he would be excused before God and the "Holy Apostolic See, and our Lord Cardinals," who had especially recommended Bonus for this appointment. Later in the same month, a mandate to the official of the archdeacon of Totnes and the dean rural of Tavistock shows that some of the monks were at least as bad as the abbot; for the bishop has heard that certain of the monks have seized, hidden, and detained some books, silver vessels, and other goods which had belonged to the late abbot (Campell), and now belonged to the abbey. They are to restore the goods at once, on pain of the greater excommunication. In December, the abbey is requested to send the bishop's tithe of the royalty on the tin mines, "decima stagnarie." The request had been made before, in October, through the dean rural. At this second "monition," the tithe was paid, and amounted to £10 sterling.

Almost two years had past, and the condition of things at the abbey would seem to have gone from

bad to worse. In October, 1330, we have a mandate for inquiry. The bishop laments that the abbey, which once stood forth famous and illustrious, abundantly adorned with various gifts of grace, which used to rejoice in the devotion of its ministers spending holy lives in improving the divine services, and attending the offices by night as carefully as by day; which flourished in the fulness of charity, offering hospitality to the poor and to strangers, had now utterly fallen away, its brightness being miserably overshadowed, and its charity quite driven out, whilst its church and buildings, nobly constructed in times past, were falling into ruin. Moreover, he continues, certain of the monks are wandering about, contrary to the rule and discipline of their Order, leading dissolute lives at the peril of their souls, in contempt of the Church of God and all religion, an evil example to others, and a scandal to many; the property, too, of the house is being wasted and consumed from day to day, so that unless some remedy is soon applied the house will fall into the shameful condition of an irrecoverable desolation. These things having been proved to him by the frequent denunciations of the faithful and orderly neighbours of the said house, laity, as well as clergy, the bishop can no longer shut his eyes to them, and pass them over as if he did not see them. The official principal is therefore to go to the abbey, and personally, on the spot, make inquisition into all these matters.

This does not seem to have had much effect. At least, if things were better for the time, they soon grew worse than ever. We do not know what had happened in the interval, but in December, 1332, on

the death of James Franceis, rector of Whitchurch, Grandisson, having instituted master David Aliam, clerk, commissioned the abbot of Buckland to induct him. The abbot found the doors of the church shut against him, fortified with a stone wall and a ditch, and defended by a strong body of armed men, monks of Tavistock, and others. Entrance was demanded, warning given; but as in their furious excitement, which was getting hotter every moment, they felt neither shame nor fear, sentence of excommunication was proclaimed against them till they should submit. We must presume that Abbot Bonus was the real author of this open defiance. It brought matters to a crisis. In July, 1333, the abbot of Buckland, John de Courtenay and Thomas de la Walle, monks of Tavistock, are commissioned to administer all the affairs of the abbey—now under an interdict. On October the 23rd sentence was pronounced against brother Bonus, who was still acting as if he was abbot, “*qui se gerebat pro abbate.*” On January 4th, 1333-4, the election of “*Brother John de Courtenay, presbiter,*” was proclaimed, and he was inducted, and received the episcopal blessing on April the 24th. On May 6th a mandate was issued to publish the absolution of the monks of the monastery of Tavistock, and the withdrawal of the interdict.

This is almost worse than the state of things under Abbot Cullyng fifty years later; and, though John de Courtenay had clearly been better behaved than most of his fellow monks, as an abbot he was not the earnest devoted ruler which the disorders of the times required, but, as we have seen, he let the abbey take care of itself, whilst he spent his time in hunting.

APPENDIX D.

*SOMETHING MORE CONCERNING THOMAS LARKHAM  
AND HIS WORKS.*

THOMAS LARKHAM was born at Lyme Regis, Dorset, in 1601, the 40th year of Queen Elizabeth. His parents must have been fairly well off, as he was sent to Cambridge, where his last year at Jesus' College may possibly have overlapped John Milton's first year at Christ's. Larkham settled at Northam, near Bideford; and the fact that both names end in "ham" is turned to account, in the punning fashion of that time, in two Latin anagrams prefixed to his sermons. The point is that "hamus" in Latin means a fishing hook; and Larkhamus is bidden to pray that his "hamus," or hook, may be so assisted by divine wisdom that it shall be weighed down with innumerable fish.

Larkham's sermons would seem too learned and elaborate to catch the ear of common folk; but we must remember that men of all classes were as keen about theology then as they are about politics now. At all events, he did not labour in vain, for he not only kept about him a devoted congregation, here, in Tavistock, but even won over unwilling strangers. A Mr. Wilcox of Linkinhorne, who went to hear him for amusement, was "pricked at the heart" by what he heard, and ever after spoke of the preacher in the highest terms.

Larkham's diary and the preface to his sermons give us a picture of a thoroughly good man, earnest



and humble, and of a pleasant humour; but, at the same time, impulsive and over-sensitive, wanting in tact, and somewhat bigoted and narrow-minded. Such a man, being also a parson of puritan tendencies, could scarcely live a quiet life under the rule of Archbishop Laud. On the contrary, he was "put into Star-Chamber and High-Commission," petitioned against for "faction, heresy, witchcraft, rebellion, and treason," and also for slander "for reproving an atheistical wretch, by that name of Atheist;" also there came upon him "Pursesevants or Messengers, one upon the back of another, no less than five at several times . . . till at last, by the tyranny of the Bishops, and the tenderness of his conscience, he was forced into New England."

Returning from exile, November 14th, 1642, Larkham was presently appointed chaplain to the regiment of Sir Hardress Waller. Being stationed near Tavistock, his preaching was so valued by the people that, at their request, he was presented to the vicarage, in 1647, by William, earl of Bedford. In 1651, our vicar is with his second son, George, in Cumberland; George, who seems to have passed from Cambridge to Oxford, being incumbent of All Saints, Coker-mouth, and also founder of the first Independent congregation there. As there were three other children, the education of George was a strain upon the father's income, which was not only very limited, but also uncertain. Thus he writes under this same year: "The 49th year of mine age ended August 17th, 1651, in which I received in all £66 18s. 2d." (about £200 present value); "I had nothing out of the sheaf of Lamerton, yet was it a chargeable year by means

of my son George, to whom, besides his expenses at Oxford, I gave £20 on his going into Cumberland."

As difficulties and misunderstandings between parson and people are not unknown in our own quiet times, we may be sure there were plenty of them in the troublous times of the Commonwealth. Thomas Larkham had his full share of them. His sermons on "the attributes" were written (1656) partly to console himself, "in a time of great troubles, when innumerable evils came upon him which much dejected him." In the preface, he further complains that having been so tossed from post to pillar in the time of the prelacy, he should "now, when the Lord hath given His people rest, be dealt with more illegally and irregularly than in those sad times." What saddened him most was that, because "hear-say and jealousy did too much prevail," even good men were his foes. But, considering that Tavistock had been the head-quarters of Prince Charles in 1645, it would have been a wonder indeed if a puritan vicar had been universally welcome there in 1647.

One of his leading opponents was no other than Nicholas Watts, the founder of Watts' charity, who wrote against him pamphlets "very sinful and abusive," which the poor vicar "did humbly spread before the Lord." Watts so far relented that, after Larkham's death he spoke of him with great respect, and said he wished his soul might be where Mr. Larkham's was. On June 1st, 1652, the vicar had "the doors of the Parish Church shut up against him by Hawksworth, a sad trooper of the King's army, chosen the Saturday before to be churchwarden, and confirmed by Glanvill and others." But withal he keeps a brave

spirit and a kindly humour. With lavish expressions of humility he dedicates his sermons to the professors of divinity at Cambridge, addressing them "e musœolo meo Tavistocensi," *i.e.*, "from my little sanctum at Tavistock."

So sturdy a Puritan as Larkham could not escape when "prelacy" was restored with the Stuarts. In January, 1660-1, he was made prisoner by Colonel Howard; and, being taken to Exeter by six troopers, he was kept in ward there eighty-four days. But he was not deserted; for he writes, "Divers men and women sent tokens of their love to me." Already, in the previous October, he had left his "employment of preaching in fear, and upon demand of the patron." But he lived on at Tavistock, and died there in 1669.

So cruel were the times, that, for some while before his death, he dared not "stir abroad for fear of a jail." Nor could his successor, Thomas Glanvill, so far forget old feuds as to give the poor dead body a grave in the church. But the patron, earl (afterwards duke) William used his right over the chancel; and so the brave old Christian soldier was laid to rest where he had so long laboured, and close by the family of his persecutors.

This, at least, is the local tradition, which, also, says that Thomas Larkham, in spite of persecuting laws, managed to keep together a small congregation of disciples; and he is therefore reckoned as the first in the succession of ministers of the Abbey Chapel. The order of this succession, until the congregation was divided, is—William Pearse, 1669; Henry Flamank, 1688; Jacob Sandercock, 1692; Peter Jillard, 1730; Samuel Merivale, 1744; Bernard Dowdell, 1762;

Theophilus Edwards, 1772; and William Evans, 1794. Most of these were men of mark, especially Sandercock (who, like Evans, had a private school here), Merivale already spoken of, and Edwards, who died at Taunton, 1833. Further particulars will be found in Murch's *Western Churches*.

To return to Thomas Larkham and his chief work, the volume on *The Attributes* consists of three parts bound together, and has pious addresses to the reader of more or less personal interest. He dwells much on the persecution that came upon him from good men of his own persuasion and even from fellow-ministers, some of whom he thinks have been spoilt by the rich endowments upon which they have lately entered, while others are offended by his more liberal and cultured teaching. Thus in the second address we read: "The Lord hath all along my ministry loaden me with the troublesome part of religion. . . . Reader, should I tell thee (not how the profane world hath used me, for that I could better bear) but how such as go for godly ones, some ministers, thou wouldest either not believe me, or else stand amazed at it. But I hope, by God's gracious hand, all such unbrotherly, unchristian (I had almost said) inhuman dealings as I have met with even since the time of the printing of this treatise in part, will be so sanctified unto me, that I shall live the more in Christ, and the more [enjoy] the comforts of His sweet spirit by how much the less I have of the respect of men. I confess it is a hard lesson to learn to be back-bitten, yea eaten up (as it were) by godly ones, regenerate ones, anointed ones, at least so esteemed, and having such a semblance. But it will

be wisdom in us all to take heed of a new birth that is not of the Spirit, of godliness without God. . . . These times have converted many ministers strangely, and perverted and mischieved many on the other side, who had they died before this full banquet upon the preferments of the world, would have left a far more sweet and precious name behind them than now they are like to do, if God awake them not after their full meal, and long nap thereupon."

Again, in the address before the third part: "I have been a long time a scholar in Christ's school, the true church, and many whippings have I had upon the backs of my school-fellows, who have held me fast, that I might be sure to have every lash in full smart. (I pray God they have it not laid to their charge.)" . . . . "To do myself right, it were cause sufficient to publish these following notes; [the last six discourses are scarcely more than notes slightly expanded] for thou mayest understand, Christian reader, that I go for a very heterodox preacher, among the now prevailing orthodox divines of the times, who, like Jacob, have whipped up the heels of their elder brother Esau, and gotten the blessings (as they are accounted) of this world, honour, ease, wealth, and preferments upon their predecessors' cashierment. Much good may it do them. I pray God their tables be not a snare unto them."

Whilst defending himself against detractors, he has a very lowly opinion of himself: "Let the reader know he cannot possibly have lower thoughts of me or my labours than I have both of myself and them. I account myself unworthy to speak of God." In the second address, we have this, to the same effect :

“I am not ashamed to confess that, after thirty years’ preaching, I am ashamed of my preaching, and stand gazing upon those with admiration, unto whom yet, by it, God revealed Himself in His son a gracious Father, the number of which is not inconsiderable.” The secret of his power is disclosed at the end of his second address: “The Lord keep us in this hour of temptation. . . . . To live in Him is wished to thee by him that desires no other happiness for himself.” So, at the end of the fifth address: “To mine old and large acquaintance that are masters and presidents of colleges and have great benefices and high places, and full purses and many friends, let me say, *I have a God*, such a one as this treatise holds Him forth to be; and ‘*He is my Shepherd, therefore I cannot want.*’ . . . . . And for mine unworthiness, my comfort is (which the world cannot take from me) I have a Christ, *who loved me and gave Himself for me*, and who hath owned me all along in my labours, wrongs, and sufferings.”

The third address, in the midst of the discourse on God’s justice, taken in connection with entries in the diary, gives us one striking example of the way in which the old veteran was assailed by younger ministers; the assailant in this case being no other than the devout, eloquent, and learned John Howe. At a Wednesday evening lecture our vicar was teaching that the prayer of Jesus, “Let this cup pass from me,” was the utterance of His natural, not of His divine will—a view he had already maintained in his discourse on the justice of God. There happened to be amongst his audience a young minister, nearly thirty years his junior, and this was no other than

John Howe, at that time vicar of Great Torrington. Howe disapproved of the vicar's teaching, and, in his youthful zeal, instead of speaking to him privately, he clamoured against him in all the country side, and even "lashed him fiercely" from his own pulpit in Tavistock parish church, where he happened to be preaching, January 16th, 1656.

Here is a specimen of Larkham's plain speaking in the way of rebuke, from the close of the sermon on the anger of God: "We have known many a fair morning that hath proved foul afternoon, and many have made good that cursed proverb, 'a young saint and an old devill.' Many piping hot Puritans (as they were nicknamed by the profane atheists of the world) have grown some lukewarm, yea, some key-cold; laying aside duties, ordinances, all means of graces, and all exercises of religion—but sure God's soul will have no pleasure in such—such as withdraw from saint assemblies are the children of perdition. If ye will forsake the worship of God, I am sure ye are ordained to condemnation (unlesse, I mean, God change your hearts). Such as run from prescribed waies are running to their own destruction, however a company of poor, besotted, deluded souls do think the contrary."

Here are some words of consolation under trial, at the end of the last sermon on the immensity, *i.e.* the omnipresence, of God: "Thy father is present intimately. He can and will deliver if it be for thy good; or else will make it all to work to serve for good. Let us behold the Lord always before us; not onely to support our spirits, but to order them also unto exactness, and likewise our lives. The



Absolute, Simple, Infinite, Eternal, Immutable, Immense God, Father, Son, and Spirit, drown us in the sea of Himself, blessed for ever. O that we might there lose ourselves and all other created things; desiring, requiring, minding, loving, regarding nothing else, professing all things in Him, in whom all things are. That God alone may be our portion, our all in all for ever."

Dr. Grosart in his *Representative Nonconformists*\* says, "If the 'Attributes' shows Thomas Larkham to have been a keen, sinewy, vigorous intellect, the 'Wedding Supper' bears witness to a wistful, yearning, loving heart." There is not much of this spirit in the diatribe quoted in the text. But here are two extracts in which his breadth of view and his common-sense shine out conspicuously: "Diligently frequent the places where the Word is faithfully preached. Be not so superstitious or silly as to think it is nowhere to be had but in a parish church; nor so absurd and deluded as to think it is not there to be had at all." And again: "Can there any good come out of Galilee? was a question in Christ's time; the answer was, 'Come and see.' I give you that counsel, Come and see, come and hear; forsake no meeting where ye may meet Christ." We part once more with Thomas Larkham with the feeling perhaps that he was no more perfect than the rest of us; but surely with the conviction that he was a man well worth knowing.

\* This, and Murch's *Western Churches*, were kindly lent me by the Rev. L. T. Badcock, of Abbey Chapel.

## APPENDIX E.

*WILLIAM HUME'S SACRED SUCCESSION, &c.*

THE full title of Hume's book is, "*The Sacred Succession or a Priesthood by a Divine Right. Originated Stated and Maintained, thro' the several Changes and Dangers of the Militant Church.*" By William Hume, A.M., Vicar of Milton Abbot, Devon, London. Printed for Jonah Bowyer, at the Rose in Ludgate-street, 1710." His first chapter is of society in general, the second of religious society under the law, the third of religious society as settled by the interposal of God under the gospel. In the remaining four chapters he maintains, against various objections, that episcopacy was the apostolic form of church government, and that through it alone spiritual authority has been derived by actual succession.

Hume was an advanced and a vigorous high churchman; one of the "High-flyers," as their opponents called them. He speaks as slightly of our Reformers as any modern Ritualist could wish. Like the Tractarians,\* he prefers the English divines of the seventeenth to those of the sixteenth century; and, like them, would have welcomed a new Reformation on the Laudian lines. He puts, fairly enough, one of the difficulties of his view of the Church, that this insisting upon the necessity of the "Apostolic Form . . . will unchurch all those Christian societies which have it not"; and will make the

\* CHURCH'S *Oxford Movement*, p. 99.

position of many Protestants worse than that of Romanists—"Since 'tis better to be a true Church tho' with great corruptions, than to be no Church at all." After some discussion, Hume saves his charity at the expense of his logic by declaring that "we are not sure and cannot positively say that the want of Apostolical Form unchurches any Christian societies."

Hume's language is generally clear and strong, but sometimes rough and colloquial. His irony is frequently coarse and heavy. He has none of the delicate wit and easy style of his contemporaries, the great essayists, Addison and Steele. He excuses his hard words on the double plea that it is difficult to deal with such questions in good temper, and that hard words attract attention. It is a better excuse that religious party feeling was just then at boiling point; for the year 1710 witnessed the phrensy which attended the trial of Dr. Sacheverell.

Hume is bitter against Dissenters; but the vials of his wrath are reserved for the Low Churchmen, whom he calls "Moderates." As to trying to conciliate the Nonconformists, he writes, "The softnesses and compliances of several Archbishops, Bishops, and Divines, from the Reformation to the Great Rebellion, cocker'd up the Faction. . . . But what did these easie, moderate, complying, favouring ecclesiasticks get by it?" And again, "To think of gaining any Valuable Love by a dwindling moderation, only objects to the Insults of Adversaries on one side, and to the Suspicious of friends on the other. . . . I am of opinion that the moderation of those Reconcilers is more to be blamed than the in-

flexible Pertinacy and Rigour of our Scotch Brethren." (Preface, pp. xi. and xii.)

In answer to "a R. R. of our Province," who had said, "That the Infidelity of the Age is much, very much, owing to the Ill Lives and Ill Manners of the Clergy," he stands up for his order, and his defence gives us an insight into his own character. He would seem to have been a man somewhat worldly and prejudiced, but vigorous and straightforward, and, in actual dealing with Dissenters and Low Churchmen, probably much more kindly than his words would warrant. "We own," he says, "that the English Clergy are not the most Demure, Precise, Reserv'd, and seemingly Self-denying Clergy in the World. They are Conversable and Free in their Addresses: They are something Easie in themselves, and desire to be Easie with all others. And if too much Familiarity makes their figure less Venerable, it may well be borne with. . . . A Clergy with Angelical Perfection, or without Faults, is not to be expected. They are taken from among men; they live in the same Nature, they are sway'd by the same Passions, they are liable to the same Necessities, they are exposed to the same Temptations with other Men: and since this is God Almighty's way of Ordering a Ministry, and Sanctifying our Approaches to him, they who are not contented with such Priests, do in effect tell Him, that they would have no Priests at all." (p. xxii.)

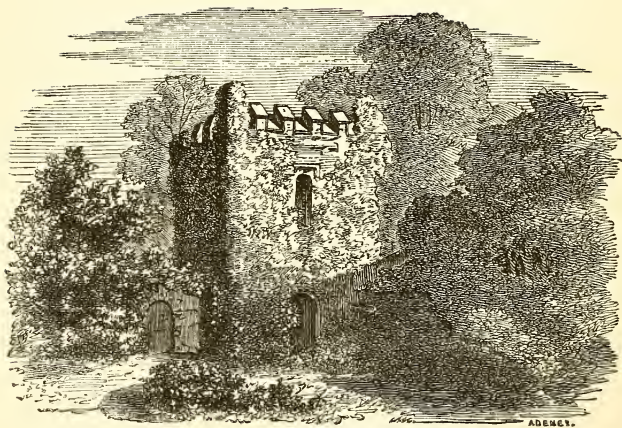
Whilst acknowledging the vigour of Hume's attack and the reasonableness of this defence of his order, we may still believe that an evangelical revival was needed to deepen the spiritual life of the clergy, and

we may still regret that the divines of Hume's school should have thought it necessary to reject the comprehensive theory of the church which had satisfied the judicious Hooker (book iii., chapter i.), and which our fifty-fifth canon expresses in the description of "Christ's Holy Catholic Church" as "the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the whole world."

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CORRIGENDA.

- Page 137, line 14. For "Osney" read "Oseney."  
Page 140, last line. Aphricanus, as the author's name, should  
be in Roman, not italics.  
Page 285, line 19. Omit final "e" in "Glanville."  
Page 311, line 29. "Sauford" should be "Sanford."



STILL HOUSE, VICARAGE GARDEN.

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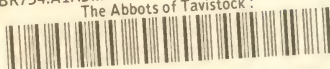


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